Atalig says $8M spent so far for travel bubble program. PAGE 2
Torres against proposal to close off 57.5% of CNMI waters. PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

$1

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXII, Issue No. 36

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More booster shots coming

AT A GLANCE

As of 6:07pm, Feb. 20, 2022

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Additional Dose Vaccinated:	55.7%
Days since last community transmission	2

Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	37,983
Fully Vaccinated:	37,004
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,328
Fully Vaccinated:	5,188
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,136
Additional Dose:	20,769

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	41,780	764[1]	42,544
Recovered	36,019	1,036	37,055
Active	4,409	764	5,173
Deaths	315	1	316

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,927	495[2]	8,422
Recovered	6,091	674	6,765
Active	1,136	495	1,631
Deaths	25	1	26

[1]2/20=141; 2/19=179; 2/18=444
[2]2/19=111; 2/18=158; 2/17=226

Source: Joint Information Center – Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI community can expect another round of booster shots, according to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., which said the U.S. Food and Drug Administration now going through the process of approving this new round.

According to Dr. Lily Muldoon, CHCC Public Health medical director, this is on top of current efforts by the FDA to create variant-specific boosters, meaning a booster that would be specific to the omicron and delta variants of the COVID-19 virus.

"We are expecting another round of boosters to be coming. [The FDA] is working right now on the regulations around this and even working on creating more advanced boosters that are going to be specific to the variants we are seeing. It will be adapted to the current variant environ-

See MORE on Page 4

NMI reports 26th COVID-related death

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. have confirmed the CNMI's 26th COVID-19-related death last Saturday.

The latest fatality was announced in a terse news release that, per CHCC's standard procedure, did not disclose other details.

» 495 new cases ID'd

In Guam, its Joint Information Center was notified that Guam's 316th COVID-19-related fatality. It occurred at the Health Services of the Pacific clinic on Feb. 8, 2022. The patient was a 57-year-old female, fully vaccinated without a booster shot, with underly-

See NMI on Page 4

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The products under recall have a multidigit number on the bottom of the container.

Abbott recalls powder milk for infants

» Recall affects Similac, Alimentum and EleCare

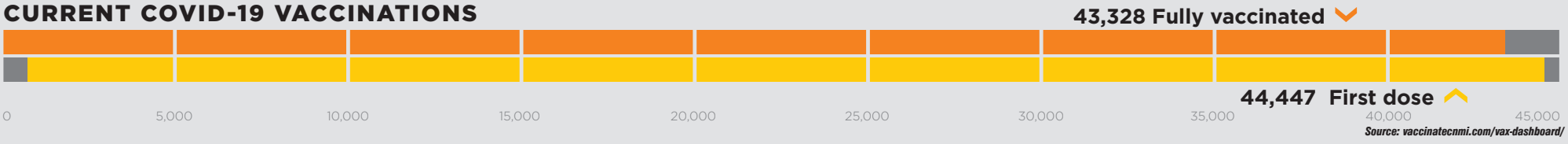
Abbott is initiating a voluntary recall of powder formulas, including Similac, Alimentum and EleCare manufactured in Sturgis, Mich., one of the company's manufacturing facilities. The recall does not include any metabolic deficiency nutrition formulas.

Abbott is voluntarily recalling these products after four consumer complaints related to Cronobacter sakazakii or Salmonella Newport in infants who had consumed powder infant formula manufactured in this facility.

Additionally, as part of Abbott's quality processes, the

See ABBOTT on Page 4

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Source: vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

INSIDE

NATION
U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin says Russia is uncoiling and is now poised to strike."

Page 12

WORLD
At least 12 people are killed in Western Europe after a damaging Storm Eunice.

Page 13

HEALTH & WELLNESS
February is American Heart Month. Here are seven lifestyle strategies can boost your heart health.

Page 14

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Local

Atalig says $8M spent so far for travel bubble program

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

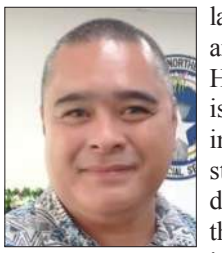
As of Jan. 31, 2022, the CNMI government has spent $8 million out of the $15 million in American Rescue Plan Act that was invested or budgeted for the travel bubble program with South Korea, according to Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig last Tuesday.

In response to questions during the House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee meeting presided over by Rep. Corina L. Magofna (D-Saipan), Atalig said that of the $8 million, about $3.1 million of that has been spent to date for the travel bucks program, which is an incentive program that gives tourists money to spend locally.

"Keep in mind that the travel bucks program is funding that can only be spent on the islands. It was issued in a form of a prepaid debit card that they can only be used at hotels and establishments here," Atalig said.

He said the other expenditures were for airline incentives as part of the travel bubble and Travel Investment Resumption Plan, or TRIP.

The secretary said the airlines were given a certain occupancy load—40% or 45%—and if they were below that occupancy, they will be given incentives of $45,000 per flight. If the airlines were above the 45% occupancy cutoff, then there was no subsidy or incentives.


Atalig

Atalig said they found themselves spending the majority in early October 2021 as well as early part of November.

"But after that, planes were coming in pretty full, surprisingly, excitingly, and so we didn't have any expenditures to the airlines," he said.

Atalig said part of that program was a modified quarantine hotel site, which was contracted out to Pacific Islands Club Saipan and Kensington Hotel Saipan. This is where the arriving tourists would stay for the first five days. Atalig said they also assisted in the operations of those hybrid quarantine sites. After the five days at those hybrid quarantine sites, the tourists were free to leave and most of them were booked at Saipan World Resort, Atalig said.

He promised to give the committee a breakdown of those expenditures.

HANMI DONATES TO SAIPAN SENIOR ADVISORY COUNCIL

Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands chair Ivan Quichocho, right, and board secretary Martin Jambor, second from left, present a $1,000 donation to the Saipan Senior Advisory Council on Feb. 14, 2022, in Chinatown, Saipan. The check was accepted by staff of the Office on Aging on behalf of the council. Others in the photo, from left, are Akio Tsuda, Lucia Sardea, Mikel Emmanuel, Domitilia Taisakan, Augusto Aldan, and Margarita Aldan. HANMI

Kilili: Biden enacted law to protect those who depend on Medicaid

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

President Joseph Biden Jr. signed into law yesterday a bill that to protect the thousands of individuals in the Marianas who depend on Medicaid for their health care insurance, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP).

Sablan

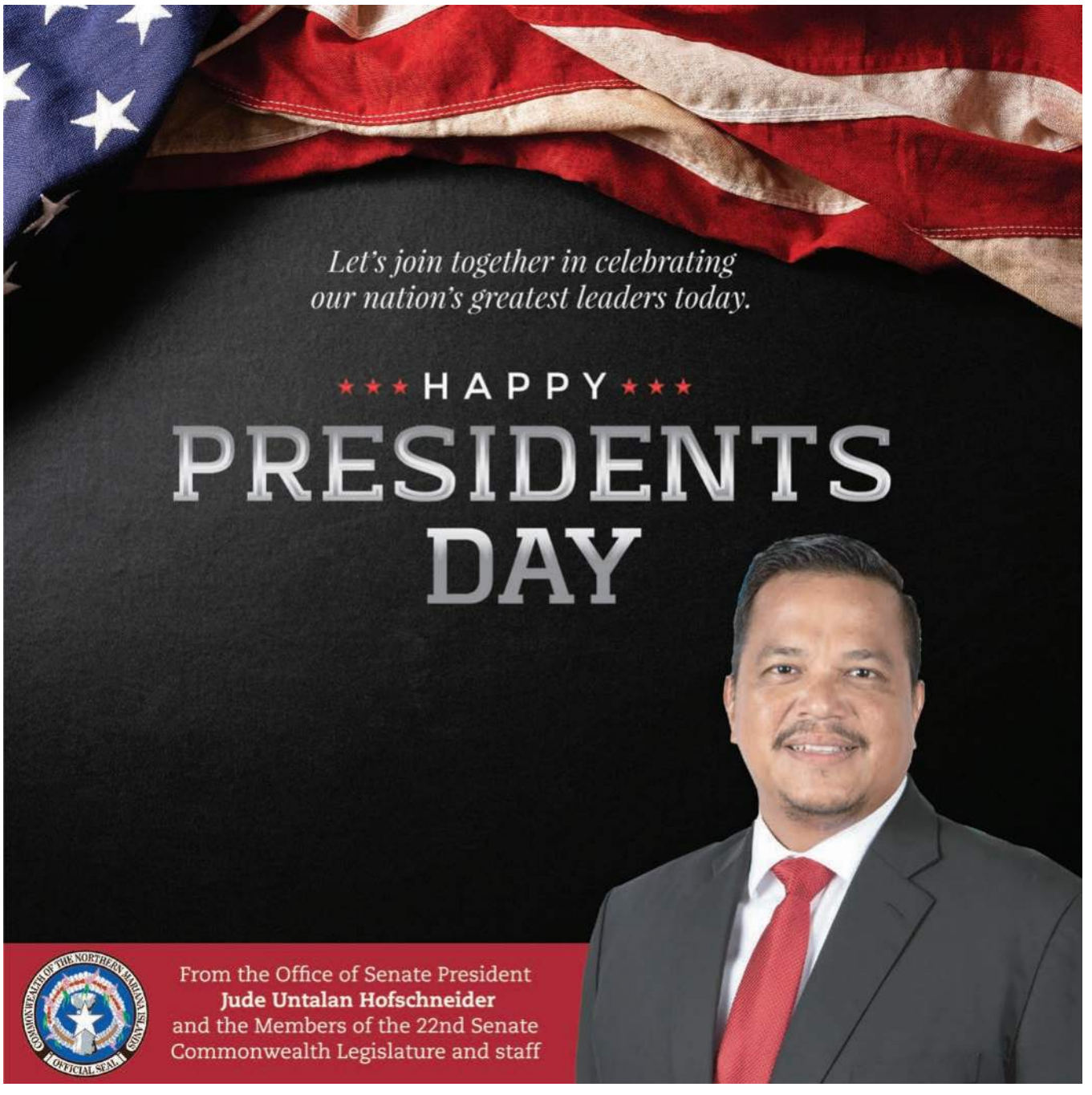
Sablan said in his e-kilili newsletter that H.R. 6617, a continuing resolution, extends the 17% local match rate for Marianas Medicaid through March 11.

"We first set the Marianas matching rate at 17%—the lowest in the nation—in Public Law 116-94 two years ago," Sablan said.

Without yesterday's extension, the Commonwealth's cost share would have reverted back to 45% and put at risk those insured by Medicaid.

Sablan led the effort by insular area representatives to make sure the favorable 17% rate did not fall through the legislative cracks when this third continuing resolution for fiscal year 2022 was negotiated.

There are about 38,000 people in the Marianas who depend on Medicaid for their health care.



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Torres against proposal to close off 57.5% of CNMI waters

Torres

Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres on Friday expressed strong opposition to the marine sanctuary plan of the Pew Charitable Trusts that proposes 57.5% of the CNMI's exclusive economic zone be closed to free passage by Marianas residents for consensual mining activities and commercial fishing activities.

Speaking at a radio press briefing, Torres said the proposal means 57.5% of the CNMI waters will be closed to its own people—the indigenous people—to freely go up to the marine sanctuary.

"And if I'm not mistaken, that means our own people, our indigenous people have to get a…permit to go to our own waters," he said.

Why would the CNMI want to allow an entity to interfere with the rights of the indigenous community/people, Torres asked. "Why would we even consider relinquishing our own waters to somebody else? And then ask for permission when to enter our own water?"

He said he will be sending a letter to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration asking for a 90-day extension to comment because this will have a significant impact on the CNMI's culture and the lives of its people.

The governor said that when the Marine Monument was first brought up, there was so much promises, including establishing a visitors center, enforcement of vessels that would be homeported here in the CNMI, and increased enforcement of the exclusive economic zone, especially in the monument waters. He said a bunch was promised, including bringing in a lot for the economy, jobs, and even the potential of 14 jobs with an annual salary of $40,000.

"And we haven't seen anything. Zero. And yet we're going to give another and support another 57.5% of our waters to be in sanctuary?" Torres said.

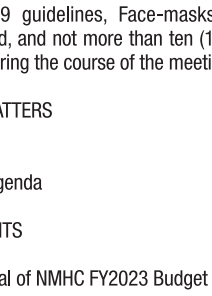
The governor urged everybody in the community to stand up and fight this proposal. Torres said he is hoping that the community would stick together against this sanctuary and ask to remove it from the request to put into the sanctuary proposal for the marine monument.

The Office of National Marine Sanctuaries of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric is requesting written comments to facilitate ONMS' five-year review of the nomination for the Mariana Trench National Marine Sanctuary at the five-year interval.

Following this information gathering and internal analysis, NOAA will make a final determination on whether or not the Marianas Trench NMS nomination will remain in the inventory for another five-year period. The deadline for public comments is tomorrow, Feb. 22.

The nomination for Mariana Trench NMS was accepted to the national inventory on March 13, 2017. It is scheduled to expire on March 13, 2022. ***(Ferdie De La Torre)***

$10K bail for man accused of 'smacking' an 11-month-old


Camacho

The CNMI Superior Court imposed a $10,000 cash bail on a man who allegedly "smacked" an 11-month-old child multiple times over a pair of missing earphones.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho imposed last Monday a $10,000 cash bail on Tienson Peter, 24, who is accused of hitting an 11-month-old repeatedly because he was allegedly angry with the child because one of his earphones was missing.

Peter is currently facing charges of child abuse, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace.

The defendant was remanded back to Department of Corrections custody and was ordered to return to court on Feb. 23 at 10 am for a preliminary hearing. His arraignment is set for March 7 at 9am.

According to court documents, it was the child's mother who reported Peter to the police. The report stated that the child's mother told the police last Feb. 11 that her boyfriend, Peter, noticed that her son was playing with the cell phone chargers and mentioned it to her. The woman said she got up from bed and picked up all the phone chargers that were scattered in the living room.

Later, when Peter took his earphones, she said he noticed that one of the earbuds was missing, which made him angry.

In his anger, Peter allegedly smacked the 11-month-old child in the face with his left hand, causing the child to fall to the ground, face first.

When she picked the crying child up in an attempt to comfort him, Peter allegedly walked over to her and smacked the child again, followed by another smack seconds later.

Police noted that in the photos the mother had taken, there were visible injuries on the child's face, including redness and swelling on the infant's cheek and left ear. ***(Kimberly B. Esmores)***

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
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Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp
Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairperson of the Board, is hereby giving notice that the Special Board Meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 25, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. at the NMHC Conference Room, Garapan, Saipan. The public is welcome to submit written or oral comments regarding the agenda below. Individuals interested in attending the meeting and needing special accommodations are requested to contact NMHC in advance. In compliance with the CNMI COVID-19 guidelines, Face-masks must be worn, social distancing will be enforced, and not more than ten (10) people will be allowed in the conference room during the course of the meeting.

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
   a. Call to Order
   b. Roll Call
   c. Adoption of Agenda

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

   Review & Approval of NMHC FY2023 Budget

III. OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

V. ADJOURNMENT

(Notes: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13 (a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.)

/s/

Merced "Marcie" M. Tomokane
Chairperson of the Board

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IPI posts initial $1M bond in the case of 7 ex-construction workers

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Pursuant to the Stay Agreement that was filed with the U.S. District Court for the NMI over a week ago, Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC has posted an initial $1-million bond in exchange for the seven workers staying the enforcement on their judgement pending IPI's appeal, and to stay the limited receivership.

Last Friday, attorneys Aaron Halegua and Bruce Berline, who are the lawyers for the seven workers, and attorney Kevin Abikoff who represents IPI, filed a joint stipulation with the U.S. District Court for the NMI informing the court that IPI has secured an initial "supersedeas bond" in the amount of $1 million last Feb. 11, and is now asking the court to approve their Stay Agreement.

"The parties request that the court approve the Stay Agreement in its entirety, including the three executed mortgages and the provision that the court retain jurisdiction over the enforcement of its provisions," the lawyers stated.

They informed the court that pursuant to the Stay Agreement, in the event that the Stay Agreement is approved, the parties will file a stipulation agreeing to grant the plaintiffs' motion to take over the limited receivership in the case of USA Fanter Corp., Ltd., but to stay the work of the limited receiver so long as IPI complies with the terms of the Stay Agreement.

Also, the parties agree that plaintiffs have a valid lien as to IPI's other personal property by virtue of the writ of execution that was executed by the U.S. Marshals on July 20, 2021.

"This lien shall remain in place until IPI has complied with all its obligations under the Stay Agreement, and that IPI shall not transfer, pledge, or otherwise encumber its personal property without the express written consent of plaintiffs or permission of this court," they agreed.

According to a previous article on *Saipan Tribune*, the parties executed an agreement to stay enforcement, with an effective date of Feb. 3.

The Stay Agreement states that the plaintiffs shall stay enforcement of their default judgement in exchange for IPI securing a "supersedeas bond" in the amount of $6 million on or before June 30.

The plaintiffs in this case are Tianming Wang, Dong Han, Yongjun Meng, Liangcai Sun, Youli Wang, Qingchun Xu, and Duxin Yan. They sued IPI for labor violation and human trafficking allegations.

The plaintiffs were previously employed by IPI's former contractor and subcontractor, MCC International and Gold Mantis, both of which have already settled with the workers.

Sword confirms administration pays for weekly press conference

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Radio owner and broadcaster Gary Sword confirmed Friday that their radio station, KKMP, receives $500 for hosting weekly Zoom press conference with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, the COVID-19 Task Force, and other administration officials, plus $300 for rerunning the press conference.

In response to an inquiry during the radio press conference, Sword said they have a business license and pay their taxes just like everybody else.

"We have a rate sheet. You're free to look at it to show that we're not overcharging the government," said Sword.

In fact, he said, they're charging less than what they would have charged those who don't have a long-term commitment to their services.

"We're a business. We do sales, we promote," he said.

Sword said he does not have to report to the media that their press conference is a paid conference.

He said the weekly press conference was just supposed to be just him or KKMP, but he decided it's good to open it up to everybody else so that everybody can have the same information.

Sword said everybody is free to ask questions as they never prevent anyone from raising any questions.

"So it's an open forum," said Sword, adding that if any reporter feels that he/she should be in the conference because he or she is not getting paid, that's fine with him.

He also emphasized that the government does not have a radio station and that they are broadcasting the press conference islandwide beside the Zoom and Facebook broadcasts.

Torres underscored the importance of having the weekly press briefing at a radio station as the CNMI is still in the pandemic.

Torres also defended hiring six people for the administration's media team. "We have different avenues on how to showcase what we do in the administration," said the governor, adding that all six are local talents and come from different backgrounds.

"It's time for them to showcase what they know and how to do social media, not just social media, but actual work that we do here in the government. And that comes also with press releases and other media issues," Torres said.

He said there is nothing wrong with having this press conference at KKMP in making sure that the community knows more about the COVID-19 situation and other things that's going on with the government.

The governor pointed out that KKMP was the only radio that was up and running during and after Super Typhoon Yutu, so the government managed to do public information moving forward. He said KKMP was also always there since the start of the pandemic.

"And…we want to make sure that this information is disseminated the right way," Torres said.

The governor said he did actually reached out to some radio stations, but they said they could not accommodate this weekly press conferences.

"It's definitely a good way for me and the government to push out information with our media team here," he said.

Torres said the media partners have done a phenomenal job in going out to the community in showcasing what the COVID-19 Task Force and the administration are doing for the community and other activities, whether it's on Rota and Tinian.

"I can't expect KKMP to follow me or go to Rota or Tinian to do social media or public information, they're radio broadcast. And this [press briefing] is an avenue for me and for the government to call reporters at one time and get interviewed," Torres added.

Torres and Sword were responding to a KUAM report about the administration paying KKMP to host the press conference.

ABBOTT

From Page 1

company conduct routine testing for Cronobacter sakazakii and other pathogens in our manufacturing facilities. During testing in its Sturgis, Mich., facility, the company found evidence of Cronobacter sakazakii in the plant in non-product contact areas. The company found no evidence of Salmonella Newport. This investigation is ongoing.

Importantly, no distributed product has tested positive for the presence of either of these bacteria, and we continue to test. Abbott conducts extensive quality checks on each completed batch of infant formula, including microbiological analysis prior to release. All finished products are tested for Cronobacter sakazakii, Salmonella Newport and other pathogens and they must test negative before any product is released. Additionally, retained samples related to the three complaints for Cronobacter sakazakii tested negative for Cronobacter sakazakii. And the retained sample related to the complaint for Salmonella Newport tested negative for Salmonella Newport.

While Abbott's testing of finished product detected no pathogens, the company is taking action by recalling the powder formula manufactured in this facility with an expiration of April 1, 2022, or later. No Abbott liquid formulas, powder formulas, or nutrition products from other facilities are impacted by the recall.

Cronobacter sakazakii is commonly found in the environment and a variety of areas in the home. It can cause fever, poor feeding, excessive crying or low energy as well as other serious symptoms. It's important to follow the instructions for proper preparation, handling and storage of powder formulas.

"We know parents depend on us to provide them with the highest quality nutrition formulas," said Joe Manning, executive vice president, nutritional products, Abbott. "We're taking this action so parents know they can trust us to meet our high standards, as well as theirs. We deeply regret the concern and inconvenience this situation will cause parents, caregivers and health care professionals."

What parents and caregivers should do

The products under recall have a multidigit number on the bottom of the container:

- The first two digits of the code are 22 through 37
- The code on the container contains K8, SH, or Z2
- And the expiration date is April 1, 2022, or later.

To find out if the product you have is included in this recall, visit similacrecall.com and type in the code on the bottom of the package, or call +1-800-986-8540 (U.S.) and follow the instructions provided. No action is needed for previously consumed product. If you have questions about feeding your child, contact your healthcare professional.

Some product was distributed to countries outside the United States. A list of these products can be found at similacrecall.com.

What should I do as a parent if I have an affected product at home?

- If you purchased or obtained your product in the United States, check the lot number with the lot locator at similacrecall.com.
- If your product is not affected by the recall, no action is necessary and you can continue to use it.

What do I do if my product is affected by the recall?

If your product is affected by the recall, do not use it and go to similacrecall.com for a refund or replacement, depending on how the product was acquired or the type of product. You should seek safe, alternative feeding options and talk to your pediatrician or healthcare provider. You can also call Similac customer service at 1-800-986-8540. ***(PR)***

NMI

From Page 1

ing health conditions who tested positive on Jan. 31, 2022.

In a statement, Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero said: "Loss and tragedy fall on our island once again. [First gentleman] Jeff [Cook], [Lt. Gov.] Josh [Tenorio] and I send our thoughts and prayers to her and her loved ones. We cannot do this alone, and we continue to plead with the community to practice caution in reducing your risk of exposure to this deadly virus, heed the warning signs, and seek immediate treatment for you and your loved ones who are ill."

This came as Guam reported a total of 764 new COVID-19 cases across three days (141 on Feb. 20; 179 on Feb. 19; and 444 on Feb. 18).

In the CNMI, CHCC reported a total of 495 new cases, bringing the CNMI total to 8,422 cases since March 26, 2020. The vaccination statuses of the new cases are pending verification.

CHCC first reported late Feb. 17 a total of 226 cases, followed by 158 cases it reported on Feb. 18, and 11 new cases on Feb. 19.

Of the 111 cases reported last Saturday, 108 were identified on Feb. 18, 2022, and three prior to Feb. 18, 2022. Six of the new cases were identified on Tinian and one on Rota.

Of the 158 cases reported last Friday, 153 were identified in the community on Feb. 17, 2022, and five prior to Feb. 17, 2022. Five of the cases were identified on Tinian and two on Rota.

Of the 226 cases reported late Thursday, 218 were identified on Feb. 16, 2022, and eight prior to Feb. 16, 2022. All 226 cases were community transmissions and 11 were identified on Tinian.

As of Feb. 19, 2022, there were nine individuals in the CNMI who are hospitalized as a result of COVID-19. One of them is unvaccinated and eight are vaccinated. One of the nine is on a ventilator.

So far, of the total cases that have been identified in the CNMI, as of Feb. 18, 2022. There have been 6,765 recoveries; 1,631 active cases; and 26 COVID-19-related deaths.

A total of 207 COVID-19 vaccine shots were administered on Feb. 19, 2022; of the eligible population, 55.7% have received an additional dose. The vaccination rate is calculated using the 2020 Census population estimates for the CNMI and includes the eligible 5-years-old and older population.

A total of 875 COVID-19 tests were conducted on Feb. 18, 2022. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

MORE

From Page 1

ment," she said.

Currently, CHCC said there is a mix of variants spreading within the CNMI community, mainly delta and omicron.

Muldoon said that CHCC is currently waiting for FDA approval for these boosters and, in conjunction with the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, will release information once it is made available.

While waiting for the next round of boosters, CHCC is encouraging everyone to get up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations. This means getting the first two initial doses, or the first dose for the J&J vaccine, and a booster shot six months after.

Muldoon said vaccines do not prevent COVID-19 infection, but it does ensure that if one were to catch COVID-19, the symptoms would be less severe.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the CNMI has already surpassed its target number of the population for vaccination. The CNMI has now fully vaccinated a total of 43,328 people, surpassing the initial target of 43,089 of the CNMI's eligible population. The population count was based on the 2020 Census population estimates for the CNMI. The 2020 Census placed the total CNMI population at 47,329.

The vaccinatecnmi.com dashboard states that a total of 43,328 in the CNMI are now fully vaccinated, while a total of 44,447 have already had their first and single dose. Those who got booster shots total 20,769.

CNMI equipped to fight omicron and its subvariant

As the omicron subvariant BA.2 continues to spread globally at a rapid rate, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. and the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force reiterate that the CNMI is equipped to fight omicron and its subvariants.

The first sample that was identified as the omicron subvariant BA.2 was collected on Jan. 7, 2022. Of the 64 samples sequenced in the batch sent to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention last Jan. 12, 2022, 43 were identified as the omicron variant and 21 as the delta variant. One of the 43 omicron samples was identified as the BA.2 subvariant. The samples in this batch were collected from Dec. 20, 2021 to Jan. 10, 2022.

CHCC regularly communicates with the CDC and sends COVID-19 specimens to the CDC for genetic sequencing. As of Feb. 12, 2022, the omicron subvariant BA.2 accounted for 3.9% of the total cases of COVID-19 sequenced in the United States.

According to the World Health Organization, preliminary data suggest that omicron BA.2 is more transmissible than the original omicron variant. Although there is currently no indication to suggest that there is a difference in the severity of BA.2 compared to the original variant, some people may still have severe disease, need hospitalization, and could die from the infection with this subvariant. Even if only a small percentage of people with omicron infection need hospitalization, the large volume of cases could overwhelm the health care system.

Persons infected with the omicron variant can show symptoms similar to previous variants. The severity of symptoms can be affected by COVID-19 vaccination status, other health conditions, age, and history of prior infection.

The CNMI is equipped to fight omicron and its subvariants. COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics, and testing are readily available.

I. COVID-19 Vaccines

Current vaccines remain effective against severe illness, hospitalizations, and deaths due to infection with the omicron variant. Individuals who are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines and get COVID-19 are less likely to develop serious illness than those who are unvaccinated and get COVID-19.

The COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC continue to encourage residents to get vaccinated against COVID-19 or get a booster shot if they are eligible. Walk-ins are accepted at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center, Monday to Saturday, 8am– 4pm. To register for or a COVID-19 vaccine booster or for more information, call (670) 682-7468 or visit www.vaccinatecnmi.com.

II. COVID-19 Therapeutics

COVID-19 positive individuals should seek care within five days of a positive test result as they may be eligible for treatment that is given soon after infection, especially individuals who are considered high-risk, including history of diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, or cancer, or are over the age of 65.

Individuals who wish to avail of COVID-19 therapeutics may visit the Koblerville COVID-19 Community Center for a referral for treatment. The KC3 is open every day, 8am–4pm (closed 12pm–1pm).

Individuals may also avail of COVID-19 therapeutics at the Medical Care and Treatment Site at the Commonwealth Health Center by walking up to entry screeners and requesting COVID-19 treatment. After-hour treatment requests will be handled by the CHCC Emergency Department.

With omicron's increased transmissibility, continue to live COVID-19 safe: follow the 3 W's (wear a well-fitted mask, wash your hands, watch your distance); stay at home as much as possible; limit your contact with persons outside your household; clean or disinfect surfaces frequently; monitor symptoms daily; cover coughs and sneezes; and get tested for COVID-19.

III. COVID-19 Testing

Individuals can get tested at the KC3 Community-Based Testing site. The CBT schedule for PCR testing is available at https://covidtesting.chcc.health. Antigen testing, which does not require registration, is also available at the KC3.

Free at-home test kits are available online at www.covidtests.gov. Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order four free at-home COVID- 19 tests. Orders will usually ship in 7-12 days. At-home test kits are also available at local pharmacies and general stores.

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services hosts free COVID-19 testing every Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday at Susupe and Kagman fire stations, from 8am–4pm (closed 12pm–1pm). An extra DFEMS testing site at Micro Beach is open on Saturdays. For the latest DFEMS COVID-19 testing schedule, visit www.facebook.com/CNMIDFEMS.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

WANTED: GRAPHIC ARTIST

Hafa Adai! Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

is looking for a full-time graphic artist.

The ideal candidate must know how to use InDesign, Photoshop, and Illustrator; can work fast and is able to work in a deadline-oriented environment; must be quick to grasp instructions; and must be able to create ad designs, concepts, and layouts based on knowledge of layout principles and esthetic design concepts.

Supercharge your graphic design career by learning the ins and outs of newspaper publishing!

Email your application and résumé to Mia Carreon at mia_carreon@tanholdings.com or drop them off at the HR office on the second floor of the JP Center building in Garapan, Saipan.

ART MAN CORPORATION

SERVICES will be:

- Sewer Pumping
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artmancorporation@gmail.com
Please Call: 234-8079 I 287-8079

GUAM & COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
WEBEX MEETING FEBRUARY 22, 2022

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs
Honolulu Regional Office - Public Contact Team

Will host a Virtual Benefits Workshop for Veterans, Family Members, Surviving Spouses, and Community Providers
on
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2022

From
4PM-6PM (GUAM & CNMI LOCAL TIME)

To participate please join us in Cisco Webex by clicking or copying and pasting the below links into your browser:

****DOWNLOAD SLIDES at:** https://www.benefits.va.gov/honolulu/

https://veteransaffairs.webex.com/veteransaffairs/j.php?MTID=m9857b7d512561041fe8eda610dd73aa9

You can join via Computer, Phone Audio (1-404-397-1596, 27625472637##), or Webex Mobile App. Meeting Password: MSfnK5q5V@7

Benefits Workshop Topics:
Compensation, Service Connection, Pension, Homeless, COD, MST, Women Veterans, Education & Training, Veteran Readiness & Employment, Home Loan Guaranty, DIC, Survivors' Pension, & Burial and Plot Interment Allowance

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION (NMHC)
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

PUBLIC NOTICE

02/09/2022
This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD funds.

NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST A RELEASE OF FUNDS

Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation
Saipan, MP 96950 Tel: (670) 234-9447/6866

This notice shall satisfy the above-cited two separate but related procedural notification requirements.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or after February 28, 2022, the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington D.C., for the release of Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2019 P.L. 116-20, enacted on January 27, 2020, announced via Federal Register Notice, to undertake the following activity and purposes in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands:

Project Activity/Type:
CHCC Community Guidance Center Transitional Living Center and Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery Center.

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation: Community Guidance Center (CGC) is the single state agency for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The Transitional Living Center under CGC. The proposed rehabilitation is to repair damages from Typhoon Yutu. The center requires replacement of doors, door jambs, door locks, painting of interior and exterior building and rooms. This includes electrical outlets, switches, light fixtures, and convert to LED lighting. The replacement of existing tins to new ones and replacement of existing wood truss in exterior balcony. The plumbing will have be redone according to code standards, replace toilets, toilet seats, showerheads, water valves, drain pipes for all bathroom and kitchen. Replace kitchen cabinets, sinks, and counters and install new ones.

The Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery (SATR) Clinic, is also a program within the CGC. The proposed rehabilitation is to repair damages from typhoon Yutu. The damages for repair include exterior and interior doors, door jambs, and door locks. They also include replacement of vinyl floor tiles on the first and second floors. Removal of existing water and sewer lines to conform to building code standards. Repair and replace bathroom walls, facets, lavatory, water closet, all ADA required updates including handle bars and door sizes. Removal and replacement of all damaged wood closets and paint. Replacement of all electrical conduits with weatherproof GFCI outlets for the exterior and new electrical outlets in the interior of the building. Replacement of all ceiling light fixtures interior and exterior. Removal and replacement of all electrical breakers and panels. Installation of typhoon shutters on all doors and windows. Repainting on interior and exterior buildings and rooms.

Purpose:
The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) recognizes the requirements provided under 83 FR 40314 but firmly believes that the eligible activities under CDBG-DR Infrastructure Program are permissible and thereby asserts that the Commonwealth Health Center Community Guidance Center Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery Clinic is an essential component that support individuals and families affected with substance abuse disorders with essential information and coping skills to pursue health, wellness, and recovery.

Location:
Gloria Dr., Navy Hill, Saipan MP 96950

Total Project Cost:
$710,000.00 in CDBG-DR funding
No other funding sources were identified

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has determined that the above-listed projects will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) and is ready for public viewing on the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) website at www.nmhcgov.net or www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com; or you may visit the on file at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan or NMHC CDBG-DR Office in Beach Road Chalan Laulau, Saipanamined during regular work hours, Monday through Friday except CNMI Holidays, from 7:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group or agency disagreeing with this determination or wishing to comment on the project may submit written comments to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation. You may submit comments from the following options: Via mail to P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950; Direct delivery to the central office in Garapan, Saipan or drop-box located in front of the building; and Via email at nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp. All comments received by February 25, 2022, 4:00 p.m., will be considered by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Commentors should specify which part of this Notice they are addressing.

RELEASE OF FUNDS

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands certifies to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Washington D.C. that the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Governor Ralph DLG. Torres consent to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process, and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Washington D.C. acceptance of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and related laws and authorities, and allows the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands to use Program Funds.

OBJECTION TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Washington D.C. will accept objections to its release of funds and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands certification for a period of fifteen days following anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if it is on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands; (b) the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations at 24 CFR Part 58; (c) the grant recipient has incurred cost not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of the release of funds by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures of 24 CFR Part 58 and shall be addressed to Ms. Tennille Smith Parker, DRSI Division Director, HUD, via email at Tennille.S.Parker@hud.gov ; Tel: (202)402-4649. Potential objectors should contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

/s/
Ralph DLG Torres
Governor, CNMI

Court denies casino commission's motion to submit additional reply

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Superior Court has denied the Commonwealth Casino Commission's recent motion to allow it to file an additional response in the petition for judicial review filed by Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC.

According to an ordered issued by Superior Court Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan, the court denies the casino commission's motion to file a "surreply"—or additional reply—in response to a statement made by former IPI CEO Ray Yumul that was included in IPI's reply brief in support of a judicial review.

The statement at issue is a comment made Yumul at an ordinary casino commission meeting; "COVID-19 has dealt the CNMI its worst financial crisis in over a decade. International travel is closed. Most of our large hotels are now closed. All the indicators of a shattered tourism industry [are] clearly seen all around…and IPI is not immune to that economic hardship facing the CNMI. The IPI had to close its doors to comply with the Honorable Ralph Deleon Guerrero's [Torres] executive order [which] stretched well into 2020. And at that point, IPI's revenue fell to zero."

The judge said the court's resources are better spent going through all the records and exhibits contained in IPI's petition.

Bogdan

Yumul

"This court declines to resolve the intricacies of the argument of whether petitioner [IPI] improperly raised a new issue in its reply brief, or, instead simply responded to arguments raised by [the] casino commission in its opposition. The court's resources are better spent continuing its review of voluminous record contained in this petition for judicial review," he said.

The court said Yumul's statement and the issues raised by casino commission do not rise to the level necessary to exercise its discretion to allow a surreply in this matter. Instead, the court will take judicial notice of the statement at issue.

"Further, given the fact that currently under consideration is IPI's petition for judicial review, which contains hundreds of pages of briefings and excerpts of the designated record and other exhibits [that] contain the transcript of the Feb. 14, 2021, casino commission hearing in which this statement—and others related to COVID-19 were made—this court shall take judicial notice the existence of Yumul's statement. However, this court declines to take notice of the accuracy of the factual assertions contained within the statement at issue," he said.

The casino commission filed its motion on Jan. 6, 2022 in response to what it contends is a new argument made by IPI. The Casino Commission argues that the statement was improper evidence that should not be used to determine whether IPI carried its burden of establishing the elements of the affirmative defense of force majeure.

However, IPI argued that the court should deny the motion as an improper effort by the casino commission to get the 'last word' in this case involving the suspension of IPI's exclusive casino license.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM WEBSITE: HTTPS: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport
"Car Rental Concession"
CPA-RFP-007-21
Request for Proposals
for: CPA Concession No. CRS-2021-01

The Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA" or "Authority") is soliciting proposals for the award of one (1) concession granting the privilege to provide motor vehicle rental services to the traveling public (including the provision of insurance related to motor vehicles rented in the operation of such motor vehicle rental services) at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport ("Car Rental Concession"). The successful proposer will be expected to provide motor vehicle rental services in accordance with its concession and concession agreement at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport for a period of approximately two years (contract to end on 5/31/2024) upon entering into a concession agreement with the Authority.

The date of issuance of CPA-RFP-007-21 is **January 13, 2022**, and it can be obtained at the issuing office: CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, Second floor of Arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport.

Proposals must be addressed to Commonwealth Ports Authority, Attn: Car Rental Concessions Evaluation Committee, CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950; and submitted to and received by the CPA Administration Office (second floor of arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport) **by or before 4:00 p.m. on February 23, 2022**, at which time the proposal period shall expire. Proposals must be accompanied with a non-refundable administrative fee of $100.00 (certified cashier's checks made out to Commonwealth Ports Authority) to defray the costs associated with handling and considering the proposal. Proposals are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to cancel this RFP and to reject any and all proposals in accordance with its Concession Regulations (NMIAC Chapter 40-70).

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055, SAIPAN MP 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
E-MAIL ADDRESS: CPA.ADMIN@PTICOM.COM WEBSITE: HTTPS: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport
"Car Rental Concessions"
CPA-RFP-008-21
Request for Proposals
for: CPA Concession No. CRR-2021-01

The Commonwealth Ports Authority ("CPA" or "Authority") is soliciting proposals for the award of one (1) concession granting the privilege to provide motor vehicle rental services to the traveling public (including the provision of insurance related to motor vehicles rented in the operation of such motor vehicle rental services) at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport ("Car Rental Concession"). The successful proposer will be expected to provide motor vehicle rental services in accordance with its concession and concession agreement at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport for a period of about two years (contract ends on 5/31/2024) upon entering into a concession agreement with the Authority.

The date of issuance of CPA-RFP-008-21 is **January 13, 2022**, and it can be obtained at the issuing office: CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950, Second floor of Arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport.

Proposals must be addressed to Commonwealth Ports Authority, Attn: Car Rental Concessions Evaluation Committee, CPA Administration Office, Saipan International Airport, P.O. Box 501055, Saipan, MP 96950; and submitted to and received by the CPA Administration Office (second floor of arrival terminal at the Saipan International Airport) **by or before 4:00 p.m. on February 23, 2022**, at which time the proposal period shall expire. Proposals must be accompanied with a non-refundable administrative fee of $100.00 (certified cashier's checks made out to Commonwealth Ports Authority) to defray the costs associated with handling and considering the proposal. Proposals are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to cancel this RFP and to reject any and all proposals in accordance with its Concession Regulations (NMIAC Chapter 40-70).

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Deadline nears for Judiciary summer pre-law program application

The NMI Judiciary is accepting applications for the 2022 Summer Pre-Law Program, which is a valuable opportunity for those interested in the law and those thinking about going to law school. The program is open to college students and graduates and will take place on Saipan from June 27 to July 13, 2022. It will center around introductory classes on two legal topics, but will include a variety of other activities.

The two law professors heading the program both share the distinction of having grown up in the NMI. Rose Cuison-Villazor is an alumna of Mount Carmel School who is an expert on immigration law and the dean of Rutgers Law School. She is the first Filipina-American to become the dean of a law school in the United States. She will teach property law.

The second professor is Eun Hee Han of Georgetown Law, who attended Saipan Community School. Han previously taught at Brooklyn Law School and George Washington University. She will teach legal research and writing.

In addition to the law classes, the other major component will be workshops about preparing for the Law School Admission Test and the law school admissions process. Participants will be paired with attorney-mentors who will provide assistance and guidance. Finally, they will also go on tours of the local courts and be able to participate in a mock appellate hearing before a panel of justices.

Since the Pre-Law Program's beginning in 1991, 35 participants have graduated from law school, and most have returned to our islands. They include Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona of the U.S. District Court, Justice Perry B. Inos of the NMI Supreme Court, and assistant attorney general Carmen V. Borja as well as attorneys in the private sector such as Janet King, Anthony H. Aguon, Frances Demapan, and Jose P. Mafnas, Jr.

The application is available at https://www.jotform.com/form/212577699780878, and will be accepted until March 1, 2022. Application fees are $100 for residents and $200 for nonresidents and can be paid to the Northern Marianas Judiciary Historical Society.

For further information, contact the Supreme Court at (670) 236-9800 or Pre-Law Program coordinator Benjamin Schwartz at Benjamin.Schwartz@NMIJudiciary.com. ***(PR)***

Water service interruption in Fina Sisu

There will be a scheduled water service interruption tomorrow, Feb. 22, 2022, from 8am to 5pm for Commonwealth Utilities Corp. customers in the areas of Fina Sisu along Tun Antonio Apa Road and Tun Joaquin Doi Road.

CUC's contractor for the Fina Sisu Waterline Replacement project will be tapping and connecting the new 8-inch PVC waterline at Tun Antonio Apa Road to the existing 6-inch PVC main waterline along Tun Joaquin Doi Road in Fina Sisu. Customers in the affected areas will experience low water pressure to no water. Water services to affected areas will resume soon after.

This project is part of the Fina Sisu Waterline Replacement Project to provide a more reliable water system to the public.

CUC continues to work diligently to minimize any inconvenience to its customers. For more information, contact the CUC Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates fhttps://www.facebook.corn/CommonwealthUtilities-Corporation/). ***(PR)***

CLI - CNMI

A non-profit organization run by and for persons with disabilities

Center for Living Independently in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
#1366 Anatahan Dr. & Guguan Dr.
P.O. Box 5759 chrb
Office: 670-322-4303/04
Cell: 670-287-4303/04
Email: clisusansatur@gmail.com
Fax: 670-322-4307
website: https://clicnmi.wixsite.com/clihome

Tinian Job Vacancy Announcement

Independent Living Skills (ILS) Trainer/administrative assistant

Job Summary: The Independent Living Trainer must have a strong voice for disability rights and independent living, working to assist consumers in maintaining their lives independently in the community. Promotes Disability Partners in the service area and collaborates with community agencies to best assist the consumer to reach goals for independent living.

Job description:
- Assists clients with self-care
- Teaches communication skills
- Trains and assists with community living
- Teaches socialization skills, Increases the client's independence
- Encourages interaction with people without disabilities who are not caregivers
- Provides schedules, routines, environments, and interaction similar to persons without disabilities of a comparable age
- Supports the development of decision-making skills and informed choices in all aspects of daily living
- Assist director and administration duties
- Maintain confidentiality and support privacy at all times.
- Other duties as assigned

Job Qualification:
Degree in Human Services related field or a High School diploma and have at least 2 years of experience in case-management services and/or one year of experience in providing services to persons with disabilities. This position requires excellent written and verbal communication skills, organizational aptitude, and the ability to manage multiple tasks with minimal supervision. Must be available to work a fully flexible schedule as needed.

Documents needed:
Copy of Degree/Diploma, resume, updated police clearance, Valid Driver's License, Covid-19 Vaccination card/record.

RESUME/BIODATA, CURRENT POLICE CLEARANCE, COPY OF VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE, Covid Vaccination record card.

NO PHONE INQUIRIES PLEASE

Please submit resume and documents to clisusansatur@gmail.com or submit to Building 1366 in capitol hill

Closing Date: 4/3/2022

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Office of Procurement
Guma' Hustisia, Iimwal Aweewe, House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165, Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: (670) 236-9791
Email: procurement@nmijudiciary.com

FERMIN B. DELA CRUZ
Procurement Officer
FEBRUARY 21, 2022

INVITATION FOR BIDS
NO. ITB-2022-JUD-9
VSS BID NO. 42200072

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 21, 2022 (ChST)
SUBMIT VIA: THE CNMI GOVERNMENT'S VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL
TIME: 10:00 A.M.

The Commonwealth Judicial Branch ("Judiciary") is accepting bids for the purchase and delivery of one (1) 4X4 full-size pick-up truck from certified car dealers for the Drug Court Division.

This solicitation is made pursuant to NMI Judiciary Rules of Procurement Rule 12 and Rule 18 and funded by the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation ("SNILD") Saipan Local Law ("SLL") 20-24.

A copy of the Invitation for Bids Package ("Package") is available on the CNMI Government's new Vendor portal, Vendor Self Service ("VSS"), at https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/default.aspx. The package may also be retrieved online at www.nmijudiciary.com. You must register on the VSS to participate in this ITB. For registration instructions, please follow the link: https://www.finance.gov.mp/division-forms/oit/cnmi-vss-registration-instructions.pdf.

The Judiciary reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or portions thereof, and waive immaterial defects if to do so would be in the best interest of the CNMI government.

The provisions of the NMI Judiciary Rules of Procurement Rule 69 prohibiting gratuities, kickbacks and contingent fees shall apply.

/s/ ROBERTO C. NARAJA
PRESIDING JUDGE

/s/FERMIN B. DELA CRUZ
PROCUREMENT OFFICER

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 22-048

Opening Date: February 9, 2022
Closing Date: February 23, 2022

POSITION TITLE:	**Administrative Assistant**
DEPARTMENT:	**Water Division**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$16,742.00 - $22,602.00 per annum, Non-Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Drinking Water & Wastewater Division Manager or his/her designee.

Duties:
- Gathers, assembles updates, processes and/or distributes forms, documents, requests, invoices, mail and/or records; reviews information for completeness, accuracy and content; resolves discrepancies; prepares information for processing and disseminates and/or maintains documentation.
- Provides reception duties and responds to requests for information; provides customer support with completing forms and answering routine questions; refers inquiries as required to the appropriate resource; and advises management of issues for resolution.
- Enters data in systems or on documents; organizes and maintain files, records, logs, and/or timesheets; ensure file integrity and retention of records and documentation according to established procedures.
- Retrieves and/or prepares reports, correspondence, documents, deposits, account adjustments and other related documentation.
- Monitors supplies, materials and/or equipment inventory; prepares requisitions replenishment of supplies or required services; monitors order status; coordinates deliveries and services with vendors; and may provide pick up or delivery of documents or items as needed.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements: High School Diploma, GED or ABE Program.

Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances (based on assignment); Customer service principles; Basic filing and recordkeeping principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Basic inventory and supplies maintenance practices; Specialized equipment relevant to area of assignment; Modern office technology. Strong interpersonal and communication skills, clerical skills, and moderate computer proficiency.

Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards (based on assignment); Providing customer service, Filing, organizing and maintain records and files; Preparing basic reports, correspondence and documentation; Managing time and prioritizing requests; Providing attention to detail; Proofreading documents for accuracy; Identifying errors and making corrections; Reviewing and researching account information; Maintaining confidentiality of records and information; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with co-workers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing: Valid Driver's License with appropriate class.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources Department located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday, 7:30 am - 4:30 pm (except legal holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 22-046

Opening Date: February 8, 2022
Closing Date: February 22, 2022

POSITION TITLE:	**Trades Assistant**
DEPARTMENT:	**Tinian Administration**
LOCATION:	**Tinian, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$16,742.00 to $22,602.00 per annum, Non- Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The incumbent will be under the overall supervision of the Tinian Resident Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of Power Division.

Duties:
- The Trades Assistant assists with installations, repairs and general maintenance in assigned service area; operates motorized vehicles, equipment machinery, and hand and power tools.
- Performs routine and preventative maintenance on equipment, vehicles, systems and/or infrastructure; performs basic inspections; and conducts basic troubleshooting of issues.
- Responds to trouble calls as needed.
- Prepares job site for work including gathering and setting up materials and supplies, and setting work safety barriers for protection and to direct traffic flow away from work site.
- Gathers, cleans and returns equipment, materials and supplies used.
- Cleans and maintains work site after project or repair work is complete.
- Monitors equipment; takes readings and collects data; documents equipment readings; prepares and submits data and work reports.
- Assist with fuel delivery and fuel transfer for power plant;
- Reports on fuel status and power generation data;
- Assists with meter readings and customer meter connections, disconnections and reconnections;
- Assist with the customer meter inspections;
- Assists with power technical assistance- monitors and inspects contractor for power installations and projects.
- Responding to customer calls.
- Maintaining grounds, trimming trees and removing obstacles.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma, General Education Diploma, or Adult Basic Education.
Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.

Skills in: Providing customer service; Reading maps and drawings; Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required of assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing/Certification:
- Valid U.S. Driver's License with appropriate class;

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: You may submit your CUC Employment Application and/or resume at the Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, from Monday through Friday, 7:30am – 4:30pm. Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota can drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration office. Application and resume can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Sha'Carri Richardson, we feel you

Our hometown track star, Sha'Carri Richardson, is speaking an important truth loudly, and we don't blame her.

After Russian figure skater Kamila Valieva was allowed to compete in the Olympics despite a positive test for an illegal substance, Richardson, who was blocked from running in Tokyo in 2021 because she tested positive for THC, took to Twitter to point out the double standard.

"The only difference I see is I'm a black young lady," Richardson posted on Monday.

Well, that, and Valieva is on the Russian figure skating team, a group notoriously favored by Olympic officials. (And by "Russian figure skating team," we mean the Russian Olympic Committee team, since the nation of Russia was banned from the Olympics for its state-sponsored doping scheme in Sochi in 2014.)

When Richardson tested positive for a banned substance and wasn't allowed to compete in Tokyo, we praised her for taking her punishment with honesty and grace. She explained that she was in mental anguish when, during the Olympic trials, she learned of the death of her mother. In her grief, she unwisely reached for marijuana.

Now, it's time for some honesty and grace from the Russians.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport Panel ruled that Valieva could skate because she is a minor, and cutting her from competition could cause her "irreparable harm." But these are exactly the reasons that the panel should uphold its rules for a 15-year-old girl.

Valieva tested positive for Trimetazidine, a heart drug that is illegal for athletes. The drug, which isn't available in the U.S., increases blood flow to the heart, improving an athlete's endurance. Side effects include low blood pressure, vomiting, indigestion, headaches and liver dysfunction.

Who gives a drug like that to a healthy child? We expect Olympic officials to stand firm against this kind of abuse of a minor.

We wish Valieva good health because as an athlete, she is inspiring. At age 15, she is the first female to land quadruple jumps at the Olympics. We hope to see her incredible talent and athleticism for many Olympics to come.

But, like Richardson, we see a terrible double standard at play. Richardson owned up to her mistake. We don't know what Valieva would do or say. First, she is very young, really still in childhood. What's more, we cannot say with confidence that she is free to speak her mind. We have no confidence that leaders in Russia's Olympic program would demonstrate Richardson's courage and honesty.

We are proud to watch the Americans who win medals, we'll buy the box of Wheaties with Nathan Chen on it. But we admire athletes when they don't win, too. We teared up to see Shaun White end his Olympic career, not with a medal, but with joy and awe at where the young snowboarders are taking the sport that he built. We applauded Simone Biles when she made the right decision to put her mental and physical health above a medal.

Russia should show the same regard for its athletes. They deserve it.

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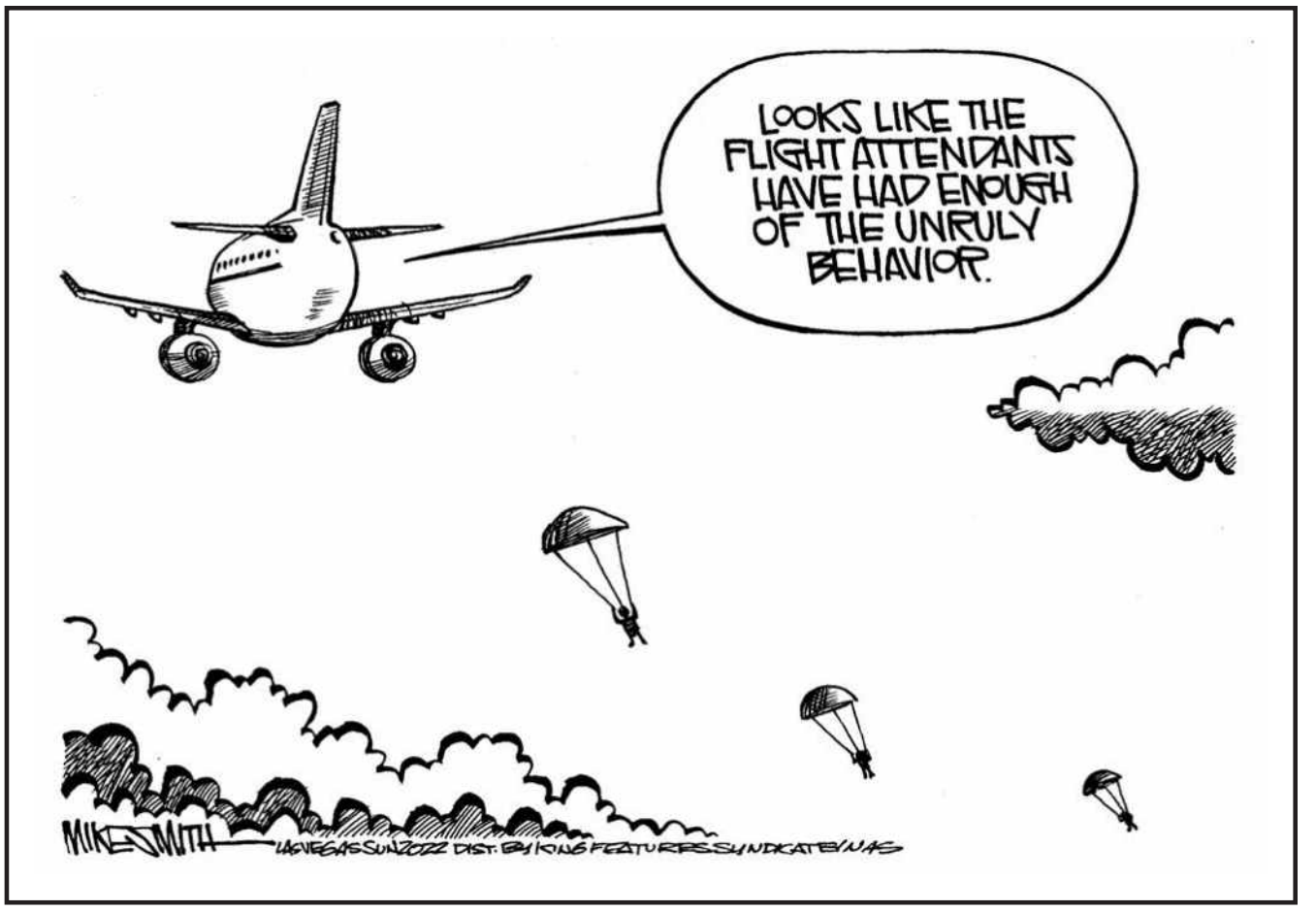

LOOKS LIKE THE FLIGHT ATTENDANTS HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF THE UNRULY BEHAVIOR.
MIKE SMITH LAS VEGAS SUN 2022 DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE/WAS

'The most fateful error'

By MARTIN SCHRAM
Tribune News Service

Martin Schram, an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service*, is a veteran Washington journalist, author and TV documentary executive. Readers may send him email at martin.schram@gmail.com.*

We begin today's respite with an easy, one-question pop quiz:

QUESTION: At the end of the 20th century's Cold War, the three nations with the largest nuclear arsenals were: the United States, Russia, and –

(A) Britain, (B) France, (C) China, (D) none of the above?

And the correct answer, as you probably know, is: (D).

When the Soviet Union collapsed, about one-third of the former Soviet nuclear weapons were still in Ukraine, the suddenly untethered Soviet region just southwest of the rest of Russia. Ukraine had far more nukes than Britain, France and China. Well before the historic election in which more than 90 percent of Ukrainians voted to become an independent nation, Ukraine had instantly become the world's third-ranked nuclear power.

Ukraine possessed 1,900 Soviet strategic nuclear warheads (but lacked operational control of them), according to the Washington-based Nuclear Threat Initiative's historic analysis, and between 2,650 and 4,200 ex-Soviet tactical nuclear weapons. Two other regions outside Russia – Belarus and Kazakhstan – had smaller numbers of Soviet nuclear weapons.

In a far-sighted development, U.S. Sens. Sam Nunn, D-Ga., and Richard Lugar, R-Ind., drafted the historic Cooperative Threat Reduction Act, that financed programs to secure arsenals of weapons of mass destruction that were vulnerable to being obtained by terrorists around the world. The United States financed the program that enabled the flat-broke, newly noncommunist Russia to get those vulnerable nuclear weapons back to Russia, where they could be secured and safely destroyed. It remains the world's noblest program never to win a Nobel Prize.

Ukraine's leaders saw the nuclear weapons in what had suddenly become their arsenal as being a potentially powerful diplomatic and security bargaining boondoggle. They wanted to be accepted and respected by Europe and the West – not just militarily by NATO but economically by the European Union.

In 1994, in an agreement known as the Budapest Memorandums, signed by Russia, Ukraine, the United States and Britain, the signatories pledged they would respect Ukraine's existing territorial borders and sovereignty. They also pledged that none of the signers would use force or threaten to use military or economic force against Ukraine.

Yet in 2014 and now, Russia's President Vladimir Putin has ordered his military to mount military assaults against the sovereign and independent Ukraine that his predecessors recognized and vowed to respect. In 2014, Putin seized Crimea and militarily put it under Russian control. This week he has escalated his military assaults – and U.S. officials believe, cyberattacks against Ukraine banking – against Ukraine. And he has amassed what U.S. intelligence officials say is now 190,000 Russian troops surrounding Ukraine in what President Joe Biden believes will be an invasion of Ukraine that will target the capital, Kyiv.

Why? There are two primary reasons. One has long seemed uppermost in Putin's mind: Putin has made clear that he believes Ukraine is not – and can never be! – an independent country. Putin considers Ukraine historically and forever Russian. Period. Thus, his mind seems to explode every time Ukraine leaders seek to join the European Union or even develop trade relationships with Europe. That was what caused him to explode and take Crimea by force in 2014.

A Putin invasion that takes Kyiv will be the most devastating military conquest Europe has seen since Adolph Hitler. It's a valid comparison. A Putin invasion will shame all Russians, given the historic suffering their families endured in battling invading Nazis.

Putin also has a list of security concerns that come down to the true fact that, ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States has agreed (and, yes, even promoted) an eastward expansion of NATO. Former Soviet eastern bloc satellites are now NATO members. And Ukraine keeps saying it wants that too – prompting Putin to erupt every time, even though there's no NATO interest in doing any such thing.

Here Putin has some valid concerns that have bipartisan roots that reach all the way to the USA. President George H. W. Bush's Secretary of State James Baker once suggested to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev that maybe NATO would stay put and move "not one inch" toward Russia. President Bush was furious when he heard of Baker's suggestion. But Gorbachev apparently considered it an assurance.

Enter President Bill Clinton. He swept aside objections from his top defense officials and surprised them, according to recently declassified documents, by pursuing a fast-track eastward expansion of NATO. But this was more than just reflex negativity from the Pentagon. For the architect of America's Cold War policy, diplomat George Kennan, weighed in as well. In a 1997 New York Times commentary, the 93-year-old Kennan cautioned us all. "Expanding NATO," Kennan wrote, "would be the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-cold-war era."

"The Most Fateful Error," now playing on a news screen near you.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

New COVID variants complicate the question of vaccine mandates

By FAYE FLAM
Bloomberg Opinion

Faye Flam is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist and host of the podcast* Follow the Science*. She has written for the* Economist, the New York Times, the Washington Post, Psychology Today, Science *and other publications.*

Post-infection immunity might be a strange topic for political strife, but it touches on COVID vaccine mandates and whether those who've had the virus should be exempt. And so when publications such as The Hill run headlines such as "CDC Finally Recognizing Natural Immunity – Legislators should Follow," it carries the implication the CDC has been ignoring some long-held scientific evidence. But the science is more complicated and unsettled than that.

The relevant science question isn't whether natural immunity exists but whether it's as protective and lasts as long as vaccine-induced immunity. Studies have given conflicting answers. The situation is now changing again, as the BA.2 variant is starting to take over. It's still considered omicron, but it looks to be wildly different from the version of omicron that's been dominant, called BA.1.

Scientists confirmed that an infection with SARS-CoV-2 creates some degree of immunity in May 2020, based in part on a study published in Science, which was led by Dan Barouch, director of the Center for Virology and Vaccine Research at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. "We did the study in May 2020, not so much to test natural immunity, but really as part of our vaccine program," he told me this week.

Vaccines work by fooling the body into acting as if it's been infected, and so vaccines work best against diseases where post-infection immunity is strong and lasting, he said, such as measles, mumps and rubella. It hasn't worked for HIV, a virus that attacks the immune system and can't be cleared except in some rare cases with medical intervention.

With COVID, antibodies wane over time. That can decrease immunity, as can new variants. With the original variant, it looked like vaccines gave better protection than getting infected. But during the delta surge, some studies showed that had reversed. New data released by CDC show that a previous infection gave people better protection against delta than either one or two shots of a vaccine. But getting vaccinated in addition to getting infected gave people the strongest protection—so it wasn't overkill to recommend vaccination to people who'd been infected. Boosters also restored most of the effectiveness of the vaccines.

"There was an early perception that vaccination is hands down better than natural infection—and a lot of people still feel that will be the case," Barouch said. "But I think it's more nuanced now, and a lot of people think natural immunity gives you a substantial level of protection." But how much protection, compared to vaccination? "That's not clear." Barouch agrees with many other researchers I've talked to—that a confirmed COVID infection could probably substitute for a single shot.

Before the COVID-19 vaccines were developed, scientists told me that with other viral infections, vaccines are sometimes more protective than past infection and sometimes less so. One reason vaccines sometimes work better is that viruses often disable a person's immune response as part of their own survival strategy. That's happening with SARS-CoV-2 according to some studies, said Shiv Pillai, a professor of immunology at Harvard Medical School.

The disadvantage for COVID-19 vaccines is that they are designed to only produce antibodies that attack just one part of the virus—the spike protein. As the spike protein keeps mutating, the vaccines lose some efficacy. Getting infected might provide people with broader, multi-variant protection.

It seems absurd for anyone to try to get infected as a way to gain protection against getting infected, but it's possible some people might try to get infected if they are avidly anti-vaccine, and infection could satisfy a vaccine mandate or passport system. Vaccines are vastly safer than getting the virus, but not everyone is well informed or thinking clearly.

Omicron's heavy mutations changed the game. The vaccines still offer good protection against severe disease, but neither vaccination nor infection with an earlier variant offers much protection against a mild omicron infection. This post by Eric Topol, a professor of medicine at Scripps Research, ties together a lot of studies, but he also points out that most of the studies comparing vaccine-induced immunity to past infection involve the original variant or delta. Now the pandemic is nearly all omicron—a strikingly different variant that's much better at escaping both kinds of immunity—and there's much less known.

The new BA.2 version of omicron is forcing scientists to recalculate—yet again. Barouch has been leading some of the first experiments testing how well BA.2 slips by defenses from past infection or vaccines. "It's slightly worse, but not a ton worse," he told me. It looks like omicron infection protects to an extent against BA.2, so the experts think it's unlikely to lead to the kind of massive infection wave caused by the original omicron. But there are scores of other unexpected things that could happen—good or bad—with this ever-changing pandemic.

Policy decisions about vaccine mandates can be informed by science but can't be determined by science. Those decisions depend on the ethics and legality of mandating vaccines, and whether staying unvaccinated harms society by increasing transmission or depleting precious hospital resources.

Policy aside, severely immune-compromised people are already being advised to get a second booster. Right now, there's no recommendation for an additional booster for the general public—doctors have told me it's rare to see fully boosted people be hospitalized for COVID. But that might change in the coming months, if there's a new wave, or evidence that immunity is fading. A past infection might play into that decision. (For those wondering whether they've been infected, it's possible to get a test that would pick up antibodies not generated by the vaccine, but those aren't widely available.)

Such decisions hinge on which new variants emerge in the future, ongoing research into the duration of immunity, and whether scientists eventually develop a more variant-proof coronavirus vaccine. The last two years may have gone by slowly, but we're still dealing with a new disease, and there's a lot yet to learn.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Too little, too late

I actually warned readers to be prepared to see the governor address a lot of small issues with the federal stimulus money that should have been done nearly 20 years ago. It is clear the governor's plan is to divide and conquer with his assertions about the JGO being the problem and not him, followed with a volley of issues being addressed and finally completed. First the governor gets the Kannat Tabla road, fixed which he should have done six years ago if he really cared and now he is gaslighting the restoration of a pavilion at Sugar Dock when he should be restoring the entire dock with an Olympic-standard diving platforms and spring boards, as the main reason adults were at the pavilion on Sugar Dock was to watch their children diving. The pavilion is really nothing but a waterhole for beer drinkers to congregate while watching the children dive so fixing the pavilion but not fully restoring the dock really deflected the real challenge of rehabilitating the entire Dock for our youth and economy.

The governor had federal money on two previous occasions after the typhoons to fix the Kannat Tabla Road and Sugar Dock but it wasn't election season. I sure hope readers can see like I can what he's doing. But this guy is so crafty, saving these projects for election season like he has done in the past when it came to giving retirees their cost-of-living increase that only came during election season. These projects the governor is finally addressing now and in the near future can collectively represent a large royally fooled voting bloc in his favor, as for sure he will fool some as we already see opinion letters thanking and supporting him for only getting the road project done. But in reality it's too little coming too late and the governor is not fooling anyone who can really see through his poli-tricking and gaslighting.

The governor is pulling out all the stops that have a potential to hurt his chances for being re-elected, which includes setting up the Senate to acquit him. Then we have the lieutenant governor who is also running that actually doubles the odds for the governor regardless because I'm sure even if the governor is impeached and Arnold wins, you can be sure Arnold will absolve him of any crimes and even give him a job. The people who live on the Kannat Tabla Road and those who utilize the Sugar Dock pavilion should not be fooled by the recent revelations. The governor is certainly not fooling the rest of us with his poli-tricking deflection of the Sugar Dock issue to be only about the pavilion and his gaslighting of the Kannat Tabla Road that is being used for his accomplishments. It surely looks like this governor saved these issues for his personal intentions of getting re-elected but it's really too little too late! It's also too little too late for the lieutenant governor who turned a blind eye and stayed silent until it was too little too late after the JGO already had all the proof.

The governor is not through yet as there is still hundreds of millions yet to be spent and we need a lot of things done. So, I hope readers can now see why the governor didn't want the Legislature to budget the stimulus money that would have resulted in the Legislature and representatives getting all the credit for fixing the Kannat Tabla Road and a pavilion but not the dock, which is critical to our economic future as a launching point for a ferry and commerce on Tinian. Our economy is in critical need of everything we can muster as fixing the dock, which is infrastructure, we can begin a search for a Ferry to Tinian which is far more important to the CNMI, especially Tinian, than building a pavilion for loyalty voters to drink beer.

Our governor is really a good political strategist but his problem has always been that he mostly works for his personal intentions, not us. There will be more projects like the hospital expansion by the governor for him to get all the credit for something the Legislature would have budgeted so don't be fooled!

Ambrose M. Bennett
Kagman III, Saipan

President Putin, have you lost your mind?

Revolutions, two world wars, and now the prospect of another world war with the all-too-real use of atomic weaponry that could cause millions upon millions of casualties and deaths. The free world calls upon you to reconsider and withdraw your troops and equipment and sit down with the Ukraine leader and other world leaders to stop the insanity of provoking a world war. Peaceful coexistence should be the top priority for Russia. Have you learned nothing from past tragic events? The Free World is watching.

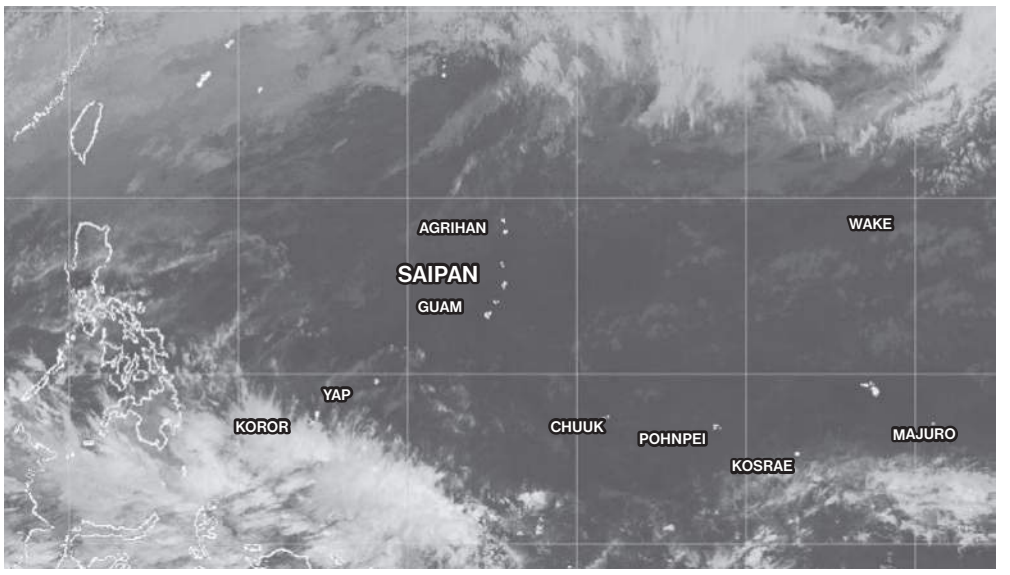
Herbert W. Stark
Mooresville, NC

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Breezy. Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of light showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers	Breezy. Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.
86º 76º	85º 76	85º 75º	86º 75º	86º 75º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:20 AM, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Doppler radar shows scattered showers exiting Tinian`s and Rota`s western coastal waters, with satellite imagery showing partly cloudy skies dominating the region. Altimetry shows seas have increased to near 10 feet east of the CNMI, dropping to 7 to 8 feet east of the Marianas. The water temperature at the Ritidian Buoy is 82 degrees.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	29 / 25 °F
Palau	Scattered Thunderstorms	29 / 26 °F
Yap	Partly Cloudy	29 / 26 °F
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	30 / 27 °F
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	30 / 26 °F
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy/Wind	30 / 27 °F
Majuro	Mostly Sunny	29 / 27 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	06:38 AM	18:22 PM
Tuesday	06:38 AM	18:22 PM
Wednesday	06:37 AM	18:23 PM
Thursday	06:37 AM	18:23 PM
Friday	06:36 AM	18:23 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	09:39 PM	22:24 PM
Tuesday	-	10:21 PM	23:20 PM
Wednesday	-	11:06 PM	-
Thursday	00:20	11:55 PM	-
Friday	01:22	12:51 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Sunny	25 / 18 °F
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	4 / -8 °F
Hong Kong	Rain	10 / 9 °F
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	27 / 21 °F
London	Partly Cloudy/Wind	12 / 5 °F
Los Angeles	AM Showers	16 / 9 °F
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	33 / 24°F
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	20 / 13 °F
Miami	Mostly Sunny	26 / 20 °F
New York	Mostly Sunny	18 / -3 °F
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	9 / 1 °F
Paris	Partly Cloudy/Wind	11 / 5 °F
Busan	Mostly Sunny	9 / -2 °F
Rome	PM Light Rain	17 / 4 °F
Salem	PM Showers	17 / 13 °F
San Francisco	Sunny/Wind	13 / 7 °F
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	5 / 10 °F
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	8 / 0°F
Washington, DC	Sunny	17 / 8°F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
04:32 AM	Low Tide	0.26
10:45 AM	High Tide	1.78
5:21 PM	Low Tide	0.37
11:06 PM	High Tide	1.53

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

■ Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.

■ Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.

■ Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 14, 2022

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	6:30am	8:20am	1, 3, 5
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 30)
TW9308	3:30PM	7:20PM	4, 7
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

BX621	3:10PM	6:30PM	7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA116	8:00am	8:46am	7
UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	2, 4, 7
UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/116	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
UA184/116	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 7 via Guam
UA184/116	10:55pm	8:46am+1	6 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 30)
TW9307	9:00AM	Q2:30PM	4, 7
OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	3, 6

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

BX622	8:00AM	1:10PM	7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

EU chief: Russia could be cut off from markets, tech goods

MUNICH (AP)—Moscow would have its access to financial markets and high-tech goods limited under Western sanctions being prepared in case Russia attacks Ukraine, a top European Union official said Saturday.

The comments from Ursula von der Leyen, head of the EU's Executive Commission, came as tensions over Russia's intentions toward Ukraine intensified. U.S. President Joe Biden said Friday he was convinced" that Russian President Vladimir Putin has decided to invade the neighboring country.

"The Kremlin's dangerous thinking, which comes straight out of a dark past, may cost Russia a prosperous future," von der Leyen said during the annual Munich Security Conference, where U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris also spoke.

Von der Leyen said the EU's executive arm has developed a "robust and comprehensive package" of possible financial sanctions against Russia with the U.S., U.K. and Canada.

"In case that Russia strikes, we will limit the access to financial markets for the Russian economy and (impose) export controls that will stop the possibility for Russia to modernize and diversify its economy," she added. "And we have a lot of high-tech goods where we have a global dominance, and that are absolutely necessary for Russia and cannot be replaced easily."

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the U.K. was coordinating its sanctions closely with the EU.

Von Der Leyen

"If Russia invades its neighbor, we will sanction Russian individuals and companies of strategic importance to the Russian state and we will make it impossible for them to raise finance on the London capital markets," he said in Munich. Johnson added that authorities would look for "the ultimate beneficiaries" of Russian-owned companies and entities.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said that, during a meeting Tuesday with Putin, he "made clear that any further violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine will have high costs for Russia, politically, economically and geo-strategically."

Western leaders so far have not specified what precise Russian action would trigger sanctions. A French official who wasn't authorized to be publicly named and spoke on condition of anonymity after Biden conferred with several counterparts on Friday said they were talking about an invasion of territory currently under the control of the government in Kyiv.

"It is in the event of an invasion of this territory that ... the massive sanctions that we are talking about would be triggered," the official said.

Parts of eastern Ukraine are under the control of pro-Russia separatists who have been fighting Ukrainian forces since 2014, the year Russia that annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, asked what Russian actions would trigger sanctions, didn't offer any details after a meeting in Munich with her counterparts from the Group of Seven industrial powers and Ukraine.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

China accused of failing to buy more Maine lobster

PORTLAND, Maine (AP)—China has failed to live up to its promise to buy more Maine lobster under a deal that opened the door to an easing of a trade war under former President Donald Trump, Maine's congressional leaders say. Maine's lobster industry was hurt by retaliatory Chinese tariffs in 2018 and failed to see substantial export gains after China committed to buying an additional $200 billion in U.S. goods, the delegation contends. Under the "Phase One Agreement," China was supposed to increase purchases above 2017 levels but China has bought "almost no lobster above 2017 levels," according to a letter Thursday by Maine Sen. Angus King, an independent, and Reps. Chellie Pingree and Jared Golden, both Democrats. They urged U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai to "hold China accountable for its purchase commitments."

US securities agency denies claims it's harassing Elon Musk

DETROIT (AP)—U.S. securities regulators responded to allegations that they are harassing Elon Musk, writing in a letter that they're following a judge's instructions in trying to speak with the Tesla CEO's lawyers about his posts on Twitter. In a letter dated Friday, Steven Buchholz of the Securities and Exchange Commission's San Francisco Office wrote that the judge handling a securities case against Musk encouraged both sides to confer before raising issues with the court. He also denied that the agency had issued subpoenas in the Musk Twitter case and that the SEC is taking too long to distribute a $40 million penalty from Musk and Tesla that is supposed to go to Tesla shareholders.

Protests grow in Puerto Rico amid demands for higher wages

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)—Shrill whistles mixed with drums, tambourines and the clacking of spoons on pots as public employees shut down streets in Puerto Rico's capital Friday to demand better pay and pensions. The crowd shimmied and clapped as demonstrators held up signs reading, "Fair wages now!" It's a call that has echoed across Puerto Rico in recent weeks as government employees and supporters take to the streets, emboldened by thousands of public school teachers who abandoned classrooms in early February to demand raises and better pensions. Protests have multiplied and the unrest is posing one of the biggest challenges for Gov. Pedro Pierluisi a year into his term.

State officials: Bird flu found at 4th Indiana turkey farm

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Avian influenza has been detected in a fourth commercial poultry flock in southern Indiana, state officials said Saturday. Laboratory testing of a second commercial flock of turkeys in Greene County has come back as presumptively positive for the virus, the Indiana State Board of Animal Health said. The samples are being verified at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Iowa. Another possible case was found about 5 miles (8 kilometers) away in Greene County earlier in the week. Two previous cases were found in adjacent Dubois County. Pending test results should indicate if the virus is the same as that in the previous cases and if the virus is highly pathogenic. Officials have begun euthanizing the 15,200 birds at the latest farm to prevent the spread of the disease.

Hundreds of rodents found inside Family Dollar facility

WEST MEMPHIS, Ark. (AP)—More than 1,000 rodents were found inside a Family Dollar distribution facility in Arkansas, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced Friday as the chain issued a voluntary recall affecting items purchased from hundreds of stores in the South.

A consumer complaint prompted officials to inspect the West Memphis, Arkansas, facility in January, the FDA said in a news release. Inside the building, inspectors said they found live rodents, dead rodents in "various states of decay," rodent feces, dead birds and bird droppings.

After fumigating the facility, more than 1,100 dead rodents were recovered, officials said.

"No one should be subjected to products stored in the kind of unacceptable conditions that we found in this Family Dollar distribution facility," said Associate Commissioner for Regulatory Affairs Judith McMeekin.

The FDA said it is working with Family Dollar to begin a voluntary recall of affected products.

Those products include human food, pet food, dietary supplements, cosmetics, medical devices and over-the-counter medications that were purchased in January or February from Family Dollar stores in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri or Tennessee.

In a news release, Family Dollar listed the 404 stores that may have sold products from the contaminated facility.

The company said it "is not aware of any consumer complaints or reports of illness related to this recall."

The FDA said food in non-permeable packaging "may be suitable for use if thoroughly cleaned." Regardless of packaging, all drugs, medical devices, cosmetics and dietary supplements should be thrown away, officials said.

Alaska auction to feature huge opal stashed away for years

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP)—Nick Cline gets calls about all kinds of items people want to sell through the Anchorage auction house where he works. But he was caught off-guard by a call he got last fall from a man saying he had "one of the largest opals in the world."

"I was extremely skeptical but extremely excited," said Cline, a partner and appraisal specialist with Alaska Premier Auctions & Appraisals.

According to the auction house, the opal, dubbed the "Americus Australis," weighs more than 11,800 carats and is one of the largest gem-quality opals in existence. It also has a long history.

Most recently, it was kept in a linen closet in a home in Big Lake, north of Anchorage, by Fred von Brandt, who mines for gold in Alaska and whose family has deep roots in the gem and rock business.

The opal is larger than a brick and is broken into two pieces, which von Brandt said was a practice used decades ago to prove gem quality.

Von Brandt said the stone has been in his family since the late 1950s, when his grandfather bought it from an Australian opal dealer named John Altmann.

AP

Dan Newman, left, the founder of Alaska Premier Auctions and Appraisals, and Nick Cline, a business partner, pose Friday, Feb. 18, 2022, in Anchorage, Alaska, with the "Americus Australis," thought to be one the largest gem-quality opals in existence.

Von Brandt said the opal for decades was in the care of his father, Guy von Brandt, who decided it had been "locked up long enough, that it's time to put it back out in the world and see what interest it can generate."

"He entrusted me to figure out which direction we wanted to go to part with the stone," von Brandt told The Associated Press.

The family, with roots in California, exhibited the stone at gem shows for years, until the early 1980s, he said. His father then branched out into furniture and displayed it at his shop. Guy von Brandt eventually moved to Oregon and kept the stone "kind of tucked away" for many years, von Brandt said.

Nation

US defense chief: Russia 'uncoiling and poised to strike'

VILNIUS, Lithuania (AP)—U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin assured the three Baltic nations Saturday that they would not be on their own if faced with security threats from Russia, but he stopped short of promising a permanent deployment of American troops in the former Soviet republics.

Austin was in Lithuania as a massive Russian troop buildup and other actions have Western officials saying that Moscow could invade Ukraine at any time, although Russia has denied planning an invasion.

"They are uncoiling and are now poised to strike," Austin said Saturday about the readiness of Russia's troops to attack Ukraine.

Lithuanian officials voiced concerns that Russian President Vladimir Putin's alleged ambitions could expand to the entire region.

"The battle for Ukraine is a battle for Europe. If Putin is not stopped there, he will go further," Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis said during a joint news conference with Austin. "They are choosing the way that is based on force. We need to send a very clear and unambiguous message that it would be faced by a very clear and swift response."

Austin

In an interview with The Associated Press on Saturday, Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte noted that some European political leaders a few years ago spoke of NATO being "irrelevant."

"Putin must be surprised now by the unity of the West, which is much stronger than ever," Simonyte told The AP. " Now we see how relevant NATO is and how important it is that we have absolute unity of NATO and the European Union. And the most important message to Mr. Putin is that there will be no decisions on countries behind the countries' back. This is what he wants to achieve."

She scolded Western nations for not taking signals coming from Moscow seriously enough in the past years. Moscow annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and began backing separatist rebels in eastern Ukraine, including the Donbas region, that same year.

"If the threat from Russia would have been taken seriously by the West, there would have been no Crimea and no Donbas. A lot in the future will depend on how strong the Western reaction will be if Russia invades Ukraine," Simonyte said. "Bad peace is better than a good war. Diplomacy should be given a chance, but there will be no trust (in Russia) anymore and I do not see how it can be restored."

The three Baltic nations—Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia—joined NATO on the same day in March 2004, and the alliance operates under the principle that an attack on one member is an attack on them all. Lithuania, a nation of 2.8 million, borders Russian ally Belarus and Russia's Kaliningrad exclave.

Wright family, activists see injustice in Potter's sentence

AP

Members of the New Black Panthers stand with signs calling for a maximum sentence for former Brooklyn Center Police Officer Kim Potter, Friday, Feb. 18, 2022 in Minneapolis.

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—The issue of race was barely brought up during the trial of Kim Potter, a former suburban Minneapolis police officer who was convicted of manslaughter for killing Daunte Wright after she said she confused her handgun for her Taser.

But Wright's family members and many activists say the killing of the 20-year-old Black motorist has always been about race, from the moment officers decided to pull him over, to the moment a judge gave Potter a two-year sentence, which family members decried as giving more consideration to the white defendant than the Black victim.

"What we see today is the legal system in America in Black and white," Ben Crump, an attorney for Wright's family, said after Friday's sentencing.

Wright was killed on April 11 after Brooklyn Center officers pulled him over for having expired license tags and an air freshener hanging from his rearview mirror, violations that civil rights activists say are used as a pretext to stop Black motorists.

Officers discovered Wright had a warrant for a weapons possession charge and they tried to arrest him but he pulled away. Video shows Potter, who is white, shouted several times that she would use her Taser on Wright, but she had her gun in her hand and fired once into his chest.

Many felt the traffic stop was the result of racial profiling and shouldn't have happened. The shooting, which occurred as Derek Chauvin was on trial in Minneapolis on murder charges in George Floyd's killing, sparked several days of demonstrations outside the Brooklyn Center police station marked by tear gas and clashes between protesters and police.

Family members and activists applauded in December when a mostly white jury convicted Potter of both first- and second-degree manslaughter. This week, they felt as if justice was yanked away when Judge Regina Chu gave Potter two years, well below the presumptive sentence of just over seven years she had faced under state guidelines.

Sources: 19 Austin police officers indicted over protests

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—A Texas grand jury indicted 19 Austin police officers on charges of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon for their actions during 2020 protests over racial injustice that spread nationwide following the killing of George Floyd, according to people familiar with the matter.

Multiple people spoke to The Associated Press Thursday on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the case publicly. Austin Police Association President Ken Casaday confirmed 19 officers are facing charges but did not have details.

It ranks among the most indictments on a single police department in the U.S. over tactics used by officers during the widespread protests—methods that led to the resignation or ouster of several police chiefs across the country.

Word of the indictments came hours after Austin city leaders approved paying $10 million to two people injured by members of the 1,640-officer department in the protests, including a college student who suffered brain damage after an officer shot him with a beanbag round.

Combined, the charges and settlements amounted to conservative Texas' liberal capital of 960,000 people taking some of its biggest actions as criticism still simmers over its handling of the protests, which intensified pressure on then-Police Chief Brian Manley to eventually step down.

ACROSS THE NATION

Helicopter crashes into ocean near Miami Beach swimmers

MIAMI (AP)—A helicopter crashed Saturday into the ocean waters off Miami Beach, plummeting a few feet away from swimmers in a crowded stretch popular among tourists, officials said. Two passengers were taken to a nearby hospital in stable condition, and no one else appeared to be injured. The Miami Beach Police Department said on Twitter that it received a call Saturday afternoon about the crash in the area off South Beach. A video shared by the police captures the helicopter descending over the ocean and crashing into the water as sunbathers crowd the beach and others swim. Police closed off a two-block stretch of the beach, in the area where travelers frequent outdoor cafes, restaurants and shops. The police department said the Federal Aviation Administration is responding to the scene.

Federal officials confirm bird flu detected in New York

NEW YORK (AP)—A highly pathogenic avian influenza has been detected in a non-commercial backyard flock of birds on Long Island in New York, federal authorities confirmed Saturday. Samples from the flock were tested at the Cornell University Animal Health Diagnostic Center and confirmed at the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service laboratories in Ames, Iowa. New York state officials have quarantined the site in Suffolk County and birds on the affected properties "will be depopulated to prevent the spread of disease," said the USDA in a statement, noting that birds from the flock will not enter the food system. The virus has been detected at commercial turkey farms in southern Indiana, a flock of commercial broiler chickens in Kentucky and a backyard flock of mixed species birds in northern Virginia.

Woman accused of decapitating son will undergo mental tests

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—A Kansas City woman charged with decapitating her 6-year-old son will undergo a mental health evaluation. The prosecution of Tasha Haefs, 35, was suspended Thursday after a court ordered the mental health evaluation, KSHB-TV reported. Haefs was charged with first-degree murder and armed criminal action after officers found her son, Karvel Stevens, dead on Tuesday. Police said officers went to the home after a woman called dispatchers and said the devil was trying to attack her. Officers saw blood and other evidence of a crime but the woman would not open the door, according to a probable cause statement. When police entered the home, they found the boy dead, bloody knives and and saw Haefs with blood on her, the affidavit said. A dog had also been killed. No other children were in the home.

After $73M win, Sandy Hook families zero in on gun marketing

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP)—After agreeing to a $73 million lawsuit settlement with gunmaker Remington, the families of nine Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting victims say they are shifting their focus to ending firearms advertising with macho, military themes that exploit young men's insecurities, all in the hopes of preventing more mass shootings. The families say Remington used those kinds of ads to promote its AR-15-style rifles like the one used to kill 20 young children and six educators inside the Newtown, Connecticut, school on Dec. 14, 2012. Remington's marketing strategies are expected to be unveiled when the families' lawyers publicly release thousands of internal company documents obtained during the lawsuit. Lawyers for Remington and its insurers agreed to the disclosure as part of the settlement announced Tuesday.

Asia

Behind China Olympics, saga of a chained woman unfolds

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—The post, on China's Weibo social platform, resembled many others posted by official media during these Olympics—an ode to freestyle skier Eileen Gu, known to Chinese as Gu Ailing.

Underneath, in the comments from users, came the questions. They were not on topic. They were about something else entirely—a chained woman captured in a viral video 500 miles from Beijing, on the southeastern China coast.

"Can you pay attention to Feng county? Where's the responsibility of national media?" one user asked. Said another: "Please thoroughly investigate the chained mother in Xuzhou so that every Chinese girl can accept the freedom and power given to them by this great era, just like our Ailing."

Since Jan. 28, the story of the chained woman who appeared in the video has continued to grow, evading numerous censors both digital and human. Underneath much Olympics coverage—from stories about copyright violations of mascot Bing Dwen Dwen to Gu's every move—Chinese commenters exhorted national media to highlight the growing scandal.

Even as the original accounts that shared the video disappeared and censors on social media platforms deleted articles and hashtags, amateur sleuths have kept the story alive online.

It is one case, one woman in a population of 1.4 billion at a moment when the Olympics are commanding a chunk of the national bandwidth. But as it unfolds, it affords a glimpse into what's happening in China behind the Winter Games—and how people advocate for causes even in the widely censored, politically fraught space of Chinese social media.

Here's how it unfolded:

Days before the Lunar New Year holiday began on Feb. 1, a video spread online from a village in Feng county, located in Jiangsu province on the coast. It showed a woman with a chain around her neck.

The chain wasn't the subject of the video. A blogger had visited the village to show her as an example of someone from a poor rural family that would benefit from donations.

In the video, he offers her a jacket, asking if she's cold. Her response is unclear The weather outside is zero degrees Celsius (32 Fahrenheit), according to the video, and she is wearing a dirty pink sweatshirt. He puts a child's jacket on her. He does not address the chain. Another video by the same blogger shows an interview with the woman's husband, who proudly says he has eight children with his wife.

On Jan. 28, the county government's propaganda office said the woman had not been trafficked and was married. Later, the statement changed. The county government said the woman's name was "Xiaohuamei," or Little Plum Blossom, and that she had been brought to Jiangsu for medical treatment from a remote part of Yunnan province near Myanmar.

On Feb. 10, the city government issued a statement saying it had arrested three people, including the father of the eight children—the first two for human trafficking, the father for illegal detention.

On social media, people weren't having it. One popular Weibo user, "Jiangning popo," a police officer in Nanjing, said to his 5 million followers: "I'm so angry I could explode."

The changing narratives provoked people online into action. Some created complex charts laying out the differences between each government notice. And as the contradictory answers grew, others took the situation into their own hands.

Two women, known only by their online aliases Quanquan and Wuyi, traveled to Feng county to help Little Plum Blossom. Based on their video and audio posts, they drove around, writing slogans on their car with lipstick to publicize the case while talking to people about the issue. At one point, according to a video posted by Quanquan, police had the slogans scrubbed from their car.

The two never met Plum Blossom, and were barred from entering a hospital where she had been taken when trying to bring her a bouquet of sunflowers. Later, the same bouquet appeared in a short video segment from state broadcaster CCTV.

When the two stopped posting, others online stepped in asking people to call the police station to find out what happened, fearing they were detained. A women's rights activist in Beijing who declined to be named confirmed they had been detained and were released Thursday.

Meanwhile, two former investigative journalists set out to the village in Yunnan that Feng county officials had said the woman came from. According to an article they published on WeChat, they interviewed village residents who confirmed that someone once called Little Plum Blossom did live there and had been married before.

By this point, many people were chiming in. One Weibo user employed professional editing software to compare faces. A WeChat user looked up court records of women in Fengxian county who had been trafficked. Another former journalist posted a marriage license, purportedly from Little Plum Blossom—and raised an age discrepancy.

The inconsistencies highlighted a crucial point: No one had the whole story.

"It evokes a broad sense of frustration and anger and a sense of powerlessness among people when they see government abuses and negligence," said Yaqiu Wang, a senior researcher at Human Rights Watch.

Little Plum Blossom has not been able to advocate for herself. In the original video that circulated, her speech is impossible to understand. Since then, the only video has come from CCTV, the state broadcaster, with her face obscured to protect her identity.

Little Plum Blossom has been taken to a hospital for now, according to CCTV. And on Thursday, the Jiangsu provincial government said it planned to send a team to investigate.

More than 6,000 new cases in HK surge

HONG KONG (AP)—Hong Kong reported 15 coronavirus deaths and more than 6,000 confirmed cases for a second day in a surge the Chinese territory's leader says its overwhelming hospitals.

Also Saturday, the government announced plans to have construction crews from mainland China build isolation units with 10,000 beds after crowding at hospitals forced patients to wait outdoors in winter cold.

There were 6,063 confirmed cases in the previous 24 hours, raising the territory's total to 46,763. That was down slightly from Thursday's 6,116 but one of Hong Kong's highest daily totals.

World

Western Europe cleans up after storm leaves 12 dead

Debris from the rooftops of three houses which were torn off during storm Eunice is seen by a roadside on Kilburn Park Road in north west London, Friday, Feb. 18, 2022. AP

LONDON (AP)—Crews cleared fallen trees and worked to restore power to about 400,000 people in Britain as Western Europe cleaned up Saturday after one of the most damaging storms in years.

At least 12 people were killed, many by falling trees, in Ireland, Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. Named Storm Eunice by the British and Irish weather services, and Storm Zeynep in Germany, Friday's storm was the second to hit the region in a week.

Winds toppled the spire of a church in Wells, southwest England, ripped off parts of the domed roof of London's O2 Arena and left a trail of felled trees and damaged buildings across several countries.

A gust of 122 miles an hour (196 kilometers an hour) was provisionally recorded Friday on the Isle of Wight. If confirmed, it would be the highest ever in England. Hurricane-force winds begin at 74 mph.

The Met Office weather service said more strong winds would hit the southern coasts of England and Wales on Saturday, with the potential for further damage, while snow and ice could cause disruption further north.

The U.K.'s National Rail association said "routes across most of Great Britain" remained affected by the weather on Saturday morning, with disruptions to continue throughout the day.

Transport in Germany also remained severely disrupted, with railway operator Deutsche Bahn saying no long-distance trains would operate north of Dortmund, Hannover and Berlin until at least 6 p.m.

WORLD BRIEFS

Modeling agent close to Epstein found dead in French jail

PARIS (AP)—A modeling agent who was close to disgraced U.S. financier Jeffrey Epstein was found dead Saturday in his French jail cell, where he was being held in an investigation into the rape and sex trafficking of minors, according to the Paris prosecutor's office. Paris police are investigating Jean-Luc Brunel's death at the historic La Sante prison in Paris, the prosecutor's office said. Victims of his alleged abuse described shock and dismay that the 75-year-old, a well-known model scout in the 1980s and 1990s who ran different agencies in Paris and New York, will never face trial. They called his death as a double blow after Epstein killed himself in 2019 in a Manhattan jail while awaiting sex-trafficking charges. Brunel's lawyers suggested Saturday that he, too, killed himself.

Greek rescuers search burning ferry for 12 missing people

CORFU, Greece (AP)—Rescue teams in Greece searched a burning ferry Saturday for 12 people believed to be missing after it caught fire in the Ionian Sea while en route to Italy, while passengers described a frightening evacuation from the ship. After working all night to try to extinguish the blaze that broke out Friday, firefighting vessels surrounded the Euroferry Olympia, which was carrying more than 290 passengers and crew. The Greek coast guard and other boats evacuated about 280 of them to Corfu. "When we got into the boats, I said 'I escaped hell,'" truck driver Dimitris Karaolanidis told The Associated Press. Photos taken Saturday morning showed thick smoke hanging over the ship, which was transporting 153 trucks and 32 cars.

Canadian police appear to end protesters' siege of Ottawa

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP)—Hundreds of police in riot gear swept through Canada's capital Saturday, retaking control of the streets around the Parliament buildings and appearing to end the siege of Ottawa after three weeks of protests. Protesters, angry over the country's COVID-19 restrictions and with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, retreated from the largest police operation in the country's history, with police arresting or driving out demonstrators and towing away their trucks. In Ottawa, Interim Police Chief Steve Bell said that some smaller protests continued but "this unlawful occupation is over. We will continue with our mission until it is complete." While some protesters vowed to stay on Ottawa's streets, one organizer told reporters they had "decided to peacefully withdraw."

Health & Wellness

This advertorial is sponsored by Tan Holdings HEALTH IS WEALTH Tan Siu Lin Foundation

7 lifestyle strategies to prevent heart disease

By LAUREL KELLY
MAYO CLINIC NEWS NETWORK

CHINA PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES/TNS
In this photo illustration, a man exhales smoke whilst smoking a cigarette on World No Tobacco Day in Nanjing, China.

February is American Heart Month, which makes this a good time to learn what you can do to keep your heart healthy.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the U.S., regardless of race or ethnicity, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Although you cannot change some risk factors, such as family history, sex or age, you can take some key steps to reduce your risk of heart disease. You can avoid heart problems in the future by adopting a healthy lifestyle today.

These seven lifestyle strategies can boost your heart health:

■ Don't smoke or use tobacco. Chemicals in tobacco can damage the heart and blood vessels. Cigarette smoke reduces the oxygen in the blood, which increases blood pressure and heart rate because the heart has to work harder to supply enough oxygen to the body and brain.

■ Be physically active. Regular, daily physical activity can lower the risk of heart disease. Physical activity helps control your weight. It also reduces the chances of developing other conditions that may strain the heart, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and Type 2 diabetes.

■ Eat a heart-healthy diet. A healthy diet can help protect the heart, improve blood pressure and cholesterol, and reduce the risk of Type 2 diabetes. Two examples of heart-healthy food plans are the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan and the Mediterranean diet.

■ Maintain a healthy weight. Being overweight, especially around the middle of the body, increases the risk of heart disease. Excess weight can lead to conditions that increase the chances of developing heart disease, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol and Type 2 diabetes.

■ Get good quality sleep. People who don't get enough sleep have a higher risk of obesity, high blood pressure, heart attack, diabetes and depression. Most adults need at least seven hours of sleep each night.

■ Manage stress. Some people cope with stress in unhealthy ways, such as overeating, drinking or smoking. Finding alternative ways to manage stress, including physical activity, relaxation exercises or meditation, can improve your health.

■ Get regular health screenings. High blood pressure and high cholesterol can damage the heart and blood vessels. But without testing, you probably won't know whether you have these conditions. Regular screening can tell you what your numbers are and whether you need to take action.

Cancer myths vs facts

By LAUREL KELLY
MAYO CLINIC NEWS NETWORK

February is National Cancer Prevention Month, which makes this a good time to learn about what does—and does not—cause cancer.

In many cases, what is known about cancer prevention is still evolving. However, it's well-accepted that your lifestyle affects your chances of developing cancer. From your diet and exercise routines to protecting yourself from the sun and avoiding risky behaviors, a few simple lifestyle changes can make a difference in your risk of developing many types of cancer.

However, many claims about what causes cancer may cause you to worry unnecessarily about your health and the health of your family.

Before you panic, take a look at the facts behind these common myths:

Myth: Antiperspirants or deodorants can cause breast cancer.

Fact: No conclusive evidence links the use of underarm antiperspirants or deodorants with breast cancer. Some reports have suggested that these products contain harmful substances such as aluminum compounds and parabens that can be absorbed through the skin or enter the body through nicks caused by shaving, but the evidence to date suggests these products don't cause cancer.

Myth: Microwaving food in plastic containers and wraps releases harmful, cancer-causing substances.

Fact: Plastic containers and wraps labeled as safe for use in the microwave don't pose a threat. You should avoid microwaving plastic containers that were never intended for the microwave, though, such as margarine tubs, takeout containers or whipped topping bowls. Evidence suggests that plastic containers that aren't intended for use in the microwave could melt and potentially leak chemicals into your food.

Myth: People who have cancer shouldn't eat sugar, since it can cause cancer to grow faster.

Fact: More research is needed to understand the relationship between sugar in the diet and cancer. All kinds of cells, including cancer cells, depend on blood sugar for energy. But giving more sugar to cancer cells doesn't make them grow faster. Likewise, depriving cancer cells of sugar doesn't make them grow more slowly.

Evidence suggests that consuming large amounts of sugar is associated with an increased risk of certain cancers, though, including cancer of the uterus, cervix, endometrium, ovary, breast, colon, rectum, esophagus, liver, gallbladder, pancreas, kidney and prostate.

Myth: Cancer is contagious.

Fact: You don't need to avoid someone who has cancer. You can't catch it. It's OK to touch and spend time with someone who has cancer. Your support may never be more valuable.

Though cancer itself isn't contagious, sometimes viruses, which are contagious, can lead to the development of cancer. Examples of viruses that can cause cancer include HPV and hepatitis B or C. Talk to your health care provider about vaccines and other ways to protect yourself from these viruses.

Healthy Living
Choose extra-virgin
Among olive oils, extra-virgin contains the most phenols, nutrients that can protect the heart.
Phenol's benefits
• Anti-inflammatory
• Antioxidant
• Prevents excessive blood clotting
• Makes blood vessels more flexible
Source: Journal of the American College of Cardiology, TNS Photo Service

Hold the salt to help your heart

By ALEX OSIADACZ
MAYO CLINIC NEWS NETWORK

The Food and Drug Administration outlined new, voluntary guidelines to lower sodium levels in food. But those with high blood pressure or who are at risk for heart disease may want to consider simply saying no to sodium.

The FDA recommendations, rolling out gradually over the next 2½ years, would steer daily sodium intake from 3,400 to 3,000 milligrams—still higher than the 2,300 milligrams recommended by health experts. Dr. Amy Pollak, a Mayo Clinic cardiologist, says a majority of salt intake in U.S. diets comes from processed or prepared foods.

Sprinkling salt can add flavor to food, but too much can raise our blood pressure too high.

"Having high blood pressure is a major risk for heart attack, for stroke, for heart failure—even for things like dementia," says Dr. Pollak.

Curbing salt use at the dinner table or when going out to eat can reduce blood pressure by up to 10 points.

"If you go out to eat and someone is preparing your food, just ask them, 'Hey, don't add any salt to my food, please,'" says Dr. Pollak.

When it comes to cooking at home, try adding more herbs, spices or sodium-free flavorings to replace salt.

"It takes a while to reset your taste buds to get used to that lower-salt diet, but you can really make up for any flavor deficits by using more spices or more herbs," says Dr. Pollak.

Maintaining a healthy weight or losing weight can lower your blood pressure.

"Certainly, some people can have a more dramatic effect on blood pressure with weight loss, but where you can see the most bang for your buck is really in the low-salt diet," says Dr. Pollak.

(DREAMSTIME/TNS)
The FDA recommendations, rolling out gradually over the next 2½ years, would steer daily sodium intake from 3,400 to 3,000 milligrams–still higher than the 2,300 milligrams recommended by health experts.

Life & Style

Sotheby's selling art treasures from divorced couple's trove

LONDON (AP)—Artworks by Pablo Picasso, Mark Rothko, Andy Warhol and other modern masters are going up for auction in a sale ordered by a U.S. court as part of a billionaire couple's acrimonious divorce.

Sotheby's auction house announced Friday that it will offer 30 works from the Macklowe Collection on May 16 in New York.

The works belonged to New York property developer Harry Macklowe and his wife Linda, who spent 40 years assembling a collection by some of the 20th century's greatest artists, displaying many of them in their grand apartment in Manhattan's Plaza building.

After they split in 2016, a judge ordered the collection sold as part of the divorce settlement. The pieces being auctioned in May are collectively valued at hundreds of millions of dollars.

AP

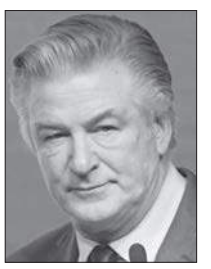
Photographers take photos near to the artwork, Andy Warhol, Self-Portrait, 1986, during a photo call for artworks from the Macklowe Collection at Sotheby's, prior to the collection being offered at auction in New York, in London, Friday, Feb. 18, 2022.

Sculptures by Picasso, Alberto Giacometti and Jeff Koons are also among the works on offer in the sale, the second from the Macklowe Collection. The first sale of 35 artworks in November netted $676 million—the highest-ever total for a Sotheby's auction.

The November sale included a multicolored Rothko canvas, "No. 7," that sold for $82.4 million, Jackson Pollock's "Number 17," which went for $61 million and Warhol's "Nine Marilyns," which fetched $47 million.

A public display of works from the May sale is planned at Sotheby's in London from Tuesday until March 2. The items then are scheduled to go on tour to Palm Beach, Taipei, Hong Kong, Shanghai and New York ahead of the auction.

Alec Baldwin and family purchase a retreat in Vermont



Baldwin

ARLINGTON, Vt. (AP)—Alec Baldwin and his family have purchased a retreat in Vermont—a farmhouse and about 50 acres.

The historic farmhouse, built before 1800, and a guest cottage rest on "50-something acres" and the property is "just gorgeous," Faith Rhodes, principal broker and owner of Rhodes Real Estate, told the Bennington Banner.

Baldwin and his wife, Hilaria, drew media interest when they visited last fall after a gun the actor was holding discharged, killing cinematographer Halyna Hutchins on a New Mexico movie set. Baldwin contend it was a tragic accident. Also injured was the film's director.

Baldwin was sued this week by Hutchins' family who alleged "callous" disregard of safety complaints on the set of the movie, "Rust." Baldwin's attorney said that any claim the actor was reckless is "entirely false."

The Baldwins have ties to Vermont. Hilaria Baldwin's grandfather, David Lloyd Thomas Sr., owned a home in Arlington, the newspaper said. He died on March 2, 2020, at 92.

Representatives of Baldwin didn't immediately return an email seeking comment on Saturday.

Actor Lindsey Pearlman found dead after going missing in LA

Pearlman

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Actor Lindsey Erin Pearlman, who had roles in "General Hospital," "American Housewife" and other shows, was found dead days after she was reported missing in Los Angeles, authorities said.

Investigators had sought the public's help in finding Pearlman, 43, who was last seen around noon last Sunday, ABC 7 reported.

Her body was found Friday morning when officers responded to a call for a death investigation in a residential neighborhood of Hollywood, the Los Angeles Police Department said.

The LA County coroner's office later determined the deceased individual was Pearlman, according to the news station.

The cause of death and the circumstances of her disappearance are under investigation.

Pearlman had roles on the TV version of "The Purge" and "Chicago Justice," according to a biography on her personal website. She also had extensive experience in theater in Chicago, her hometown.

Elliot Page memoir 'Pageboy' to be published in 2023

Page

NEW YORK (AP)—Elliot Page is working on a memoir, in which he will write about everything from his Oscar-nominated film career to becoming a prominent transgender person.

Flatiron Books announced Thursday that "Pageboy" will be published next year.

"The memoir will delve into Page's relationship with his body, his experiences as one of the most famous trans people in the world, and will cover mental health, assault, love, relationships, sex, and the cesspool that Hollywood can be," according to Flatiron.

The 34-year-old Page, who came out as transgender in 2020, is known for such films as "Juno" and "Inception." He currently stars in the Netflix series "The Umbrella Academy."

Rubens"Portrait of a Lady'to go up for auction in Warsaw

WARSAW, Poland (AP)—Peter Paul Rubens' 17th century masterpiece "Portrait of a Lady" is set to go up for auction in Poland next month, the DESA Unicum auction house said Thursday.

The Flemish master's oil-on-canvas portrait of a dark-haired woman in a rich black velvet dress has an estimated value of 18 million to 24 million zlotys ($4.5 million- $6 million).

The painting, currently owned by a British citizen, will be auctioned in Warsaw on March 17. It is expected to be one of the largest art sales ever to take place in Central or Eastern Europe, according to DESA Unicum.

"This exceptional piece of art, one of the most precious in the world, has made its way to us," DESA President Juliusz Windorbski told a press conference. "We are living a dream of every auction house in the world."

Mother's desire to unplug from world sparks backlash

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR ABBY: I am a single, stay-at-home mom of a special needs 14-year-old. I also take care of my elderly father. When life starts to overwhelm me, I tend to isolate myself to focus on taking care of my son and Dad and taking care of my mental health.

I haven't even been on social media in three years. Because of it I have lost touch with many friends and family members. I'm now being called "antisocial" and a few other not-so-nice names. How can I get people to understand that this is how I handle stress and it has nothing to do with them?

STRESSED-OUT IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR STRESSED-OUT: Explain, as you have to me, that when you become stressed, your coping mechanism is to isolate yourself, and your silence is not meant to be offensive. If you are told your silence was hurtful, apologize and point out that because you are stretched thin, sometimes you are overwhelmed and need to quietly recharge. Many people cope with stress the way you do. If it works for you, more power to you.

***

DEAR ABBY: I'm an 11th-grader. My parents have been putting massive amounts of pressure on me about college, and it's stressing me into oblivion. When I try to talk to them about it, they tell me I should be, and already should have been, more involved in my college applications process, academics and preparing for college. They say those should be my top priorities right now, and have gone so far as to restrict what I can do—getting a job, hanging out, extracurriculars, etc. How do I get them to lay off?

BURNED-OUT IN SOUTH CAROLINA

DEAR BURNED-OUT: A way to do that would be to show your parents the extent to which you ARE working on your college applications as well as your grade point average. They are trying to make you focus because they fear you won't be accepted if you don't. If the pressure is really too much for you, discuss this with a counselor at school, so that person can intercede for you.

***

DEAR ABBY: My younger daughter, "Bree," recently moved back into my home after her graduation from university. She's very opinionated and wants things her way. My other daughter, "Tami," will be visiting and would like to bring along her new Yorkie, which is fully housebroken. I don't mind as long as the dog stays off the furniture.

Bree doesn't like animals indoors (because of negative experiences with a prior roommate's dog) and has forbidden it. I let her know that this is MY home and she may not "forbid" anything. It blew up into a huge thing, and now Tami has second thoughts about her visit and wants to cancel. Help!

FUR BABY FIASCO IN NEW MEXICO

DEAR FIASCO: Inform Bree, whose sense of entitlement is eyebrow-raising, that she owes her sister an apology for the way she behaved. Reiterate that this is YOUR home and you, not she, will decide who may visit. Then set a realistic date after which Bree should be living independently, because if you don't, she may wind up ruling your roost.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

I READ THAT TEDDY ROOSEVELT ONCE SAID, "DO WHAT YOU CAN WITH WHAT YOU HAVE WHERE YOU ARE."
THAT'S GOOD ADVICE.
OF COURSE, I DOUBT HE WAS IN THE TUB WHEN HE SAID THAT.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

WI-FI'S DOWN, COFFEE MAKER BROKE, THE STORE SOLD OUT OF DONUTS AND IT'S HAILING OUTSIDE
WOW...
TODAY IS EVEN MONDAY-ER THAN USUAL
JIM DAVIS 2-21

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

CAN I TASTE YOUR COFFEE?
WHY?
SO YOU CAN TELL ME IT TASTES LIKE DIRT AND THAT I'M WEIRD FOR LIKING IT?
IT SEEMS YOU'VE CAUGHT ON TO MY GAME.
I'M VERY ASTUTE.
2-21

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

WANT TO GO FOR A WALK?
NOT NOW. I'M WATCHING THIS SHOW ON THE IMPORTANCE OF EXERCISE.
YOU DON'T SEE THE IRONY?
SAY, WHY DON'T YOU JOG TO THE KITCHEN AND GET ME ANOTHER BEER?

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Release money
5 Skillet
8 Roasting rod
12 "M*A*S*H" star
13 Genetic letters
14 Celestial bear
15 Aerial stunt
16 Train driver
18 River formations
20 Mouths off to
21 Final notice
23 Modern, to Mann
24 Tore to shreds
28 IRS enforcer
31 Leb. neighbor
32 — Haute
34 Historic period
35 Not single-sex
37 Enters secretly
39 Weep
41 Org.
42 Little angel
45 Pupil's cover
49 City of Light resident
51 Verdi opera
52 Thomas — Edison
53 Mandela's org.
54 Consider
55 British gun
56 Canonized Fr. woman
57 Crisp cookie

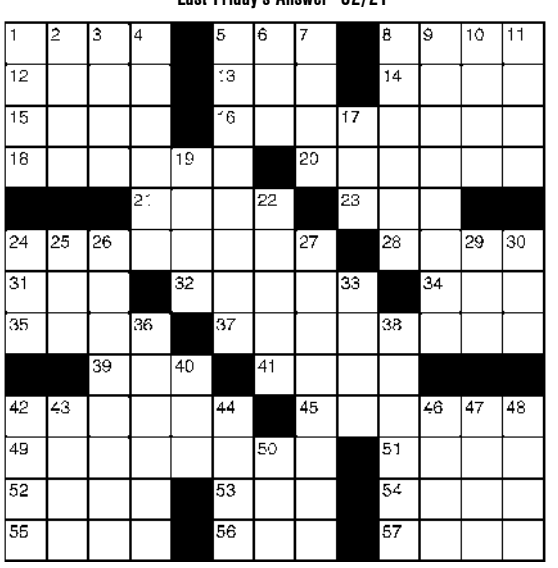
DOWN

1 Hairless
2 Balm ingredient
3 Teen fave
4 Portable PC
5 Acts as chairperson
6 Raggedy doll
7 Really pesters
8 Twilight time
9 Supposes
10 "Got it"
11 Old salts
17 Author Fleming
19 Help a hood
22 — profit (make money)
24 Rock's Ocasek
25 Equal (Pref.)
26 Keep from spoiling
27 Charisma
29 "Exodus" hero
30 Indian bread
33 Not difficult
36 Wilde's Gray
38 Works with dough
40 Greyhound vehicle
42 IRS employees
43 Sentry's cry
44 Prejudice
46 Property claim
47 Inventor's inspiration
48 Slightly wet
50 Busy insect

Solution time: 26 mins.

P	O	D		O	M	I	T		F	A	N	G
A	S	E		R	O	S	H		I	C	E	A
T	H	E	O	D	O	R	E		R	O	W	S
E	A	R	N	E	D		O	R	T			
			S	A	Y		R	E	H	A	S	H
B	E	T	E	L		V	E	X		T	A	O
E	T	A	T		T	I	M		T	A	R	A
E	T	C		A	I	A		C	E	D	A	R
P	E	O	P	L	E		C	L	E			
			A	S	A		P	O	U	N	D	S
S	K	E	W		T	H	E	S	P	I	A	N
K	I	I	N		F	I	F		N	I	A	
Y	A	M	S		R	E	A	D		E	S	P

Last Friday's Answer 02/21



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Elliot Page, 35; Jennifer Love Hewitt, 43; William Baldwin, 59; Kelsey Grammer, 67.

Happy Birthday: Set priorities, open and close doors, clear the passage forward and don't look back. Express your plans and desires, and adjust to the changes around you. Keep your emotions in check and your finger on the pulse. Making your world a better place will revive your faith and help you explore possibilities. Your numbers are 6, 11, 20, 27, 31, 34, 48.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Common sense is required when dealing with emotional matters. Take a step back and reassess your position and feelings before making a comment or a move. Arguing is a waste of time and will not get you what you want. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Clear the air and make your peace. Running from the truth or not sharing your true feelings will leave you in limbo. Search for the right words, and you will make everyone you are dealing with feel good about the outcome. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Preparation, experience and knowledge will help you map your way through situations with friends and peers who put you in an ideal position for advancement. Don't trust someone who has let you down in the past or is prying. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Get out and network or spend time with people who can broaden your horizons. Start a new hobby or educational pursuit that will be helpful with personal growth and enlightenment. An exciting partnership will enrich your life. ✪✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Spontaneity will not work well in emotional situations. Slow down and keep your intentions and thoughts to yourself until you can decide what type of response you'll receive. Focus on personal finances, property and overall health. ✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Stick to supportive people, and offer positive suggestions. Pick an expert's brain for answers that will help you use your talents. A networking function will pay off if you work the room and do more listening than talking. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Don't act without giving plenty of thought to what you will say and how you will follow through. Put a long-term plan in place, and don't share too much information until you have everything in place. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Put your house in order. You can make a move or reposition things to be more convenient. Reach out to unique people, and the feedback you get will help you cultivate a plan that can alter your life and direction. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Working in conjunction with someone who has similar goals but a different strategy will be mutually beneficial. Set up a conference, and you'll come up with options that can be pretty lucrative. Get what you want in writing. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Promote what you want to do and listen to the feedback you receive. The information will target the changes necessary to reach your goal. A domestic change will improve your attitude and your relationships with those who reside under the same roof. ✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Keep your plans to yourself. Sharing too much information will put you in a vulnerable position. Listen to what others have to say, and it will give you the upper hand. Don't let a change someone springs on you upset your plans. ✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Keep your life simple. Too much of anything will lead to confusion and emotional mishaps. Spend less and take better care of your well-being, and you'll achieve what you set out to do. Project kindness and love, and good things will happen. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are creative, engaging and sensitive. You are compassionate and optimistic.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	3	7				5	8	
			9		4			
6		1		7		3		2
	4		3	1	2		7	
		6				1		
	1		6	8	7		5	
7		4		9		2		8
			7		6			
	2	5				6	3	

Difficulty Level ★ 2/21

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

5	6	9	7	1	3	4	2	8
4	2	1	6	9	8	7	5	3
7	8	3	4	5	2	6	9	1
8	4	2	5	7	1	3	6	9
6	1	5	8	3	9	2	4	7
9	3	7	2	6	4	8	1	5
2	7	6	9	8	5	1	3	4
1	9	4	3	2	7	5	8	6
3	5	8	1	4	6	9	7	2

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

RAFAEL NADAL WINS 21ST GRAND SLAM **Solution: 8 letters**

T	E	Y	H	P	O	R	T	E	T	E	L	H	T	A
F	M	R	E	V	O	E	G	N	A	H	C	C	I	I
E	I	U	L	B	R	O	O	K	E	S	O	L	B	R
L	T	J	T	C	Ⓡ	R	T	C	I	M	A	O	H	A
B	E	N	I	Ⓐ	M	E	H	N	E	R	U	C	A	M
U	S	I	Ⓣ	A	U	A	N	B	T	N	H	K	W	A
O	N	Ⓢ	N	Q	L	E	A	S	C	E	S	V	A	M
D	E	D	C	L	T	C	U	E	E	E	E	N	R	A
N	E	A	E	S	K	A	M	R	R	D	G	A	E	R
A	R	N	P	E	N	D	S	V	E	L	B	F	R	C
H	G	I	D	E	U	C	E	V	E	E	A	A	A	P
E	N	I	I	W	N	S	D	S	S	N	Z	R	P	K
R	B	L	O	G	O	E	T	T	S	O	L	I	N	A
O	Y	E	N	O	M	R	P	E	T	O	N	I	R	E
F	R	A	N	C	I	S	C	O	S	T	N	I	O	P

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Angles, Athlete, Australia, Aware, Best, Blog, Bounce, Brookes, Carlos, Challenge, Changeover, Cheers, Clock, Comeback, Crowd, Daniil, Deuce, Double, Ends, Fans, Forehand, Francisco, GreenSet, Injury, Left, Marc, Maria, Medvedev, Money, Norman, Open, Pareja, Peak, Points, Prize, Racquet, Rafa, Serve, Sets, Spin, Star, Tennis, Time, Title, Toni, Trophy

Last Friday's Answer: Broadcaster

To purchase **WONDERWORD** books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Towns wins 3-point contest; Toppin tops slam dunk

CLEVELAND (AP)—Karl-Anthony Towns gave big men everywhere something to shoot for.

Minnesota's 7-footer became the first center to win the 3-Point Shooting Contest, defeating seven guards during the NBA's All-Star Saturday and providing a memorable moment on a night the dunk contest barely got off the ground.

Towns, who has spent his entire career proving doubters wrong about his range, posted a 29—the highest total in the competition — during the final round to defeat Atlanta's Trae Young and Luke Kennard of the Los Angeles Clippers, who tied for second with 26 each.

New York's Obi Toppin won the four-person dunk contest, scoring a 47 out of 50 in the final round by putting the ball between his legs in the air, touching it off the backboard and re-directing it through the rim.

Golden State's Juan Toscano-Anderson was second as the dunk contest, once a marquee event that at times trumped the All-Star Game, fell flat.

A trio of Cleveland Cavaliers, Darius Garland, Evan Mobley and Jarrett Allen, won the Skills Challenge.

After his surprising 3-point win, Towns accepted his trophy at mid-court and immediately turned toward Hall of Fame center Shaquille O'Neal sitting courtside in Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse.

"I told you Shaq," Towns said. "Vegas got the odds wrong."

AP

Minnesota Timberwolves' Karl-Anthony Towns celebrates after winning the three-point shot skills challenge competition, part of NBA All-Star basketball game weekend, Saturday, Feb. 19, 2022, in Cleveland.

Towns was considered, well, a long shot among a field of shot makers that included Young, Kennard, New Orleans' CJ McCollum, Brooklyn's Patty Mills, Toronto's Fred VanVleet, Chicago's Zach LaVine and Memphis' Desmond Bane.

"I wanted to prove I was the best shooting big man in the world, and now I got the trophy to prove it," Towns said.

There have been other big men crowned 3-point champions, but Kevin Love (2012) and Dirk Nowitzki (2006) are considered power forwards.

"I think this is a nice little thing to put on that résumé," Towns said. "Big man hasn't won in 10 years, and, of course, 10 years ago, a decade ago, who won it? The Wolves. It's coming back home where it belongs."

The dunk contest started with some promise and fizzled fast.

Orlando's Cole Anthony caused a stir when he swapped his sneakers for a pair of Timberland boots and then dunked in them with an assist from his father, former NBA guard Greg Anthony.

Toppin said all the participants are great dunkers who wanted to put on a show, and they all were encouraging each other.

"When Cole missed those two first ones with the Timbs on, I was like no those Timbs are heavy," Toppin said. "I was like, we got to boost his energy up. I was trying to get everybody on their feet."

It worked, momentarily.

But Anthony couldn't complete his second dunk in three tries and he was eliminated along with Houston's Jalen Green, who also struggled while trying to impress a panel of Hall of Fame judges—Julius Erving, Isiah Thomas, David Robinson, Clyde Drexler and Dominique Wilkins.

The hometown Cavs added another moment to their impressive season by winning the re-formatted Skills Challenge, which pitted teams and not individual players.

Garland, Mobley and Allen teamed up to outperform Team Antetokounmpo—MVP Giannis and his brothers Thanasis and Alex—and a rookie trio of Detroit's Cade Cunningham, Toronto's Scottie Barnes and Oklahoma City's Josh Giddey.

Mobley, a leading candidate for rookie of the year honors, sealed the win by making a half-court shot on his first attempt, allowing the Cavs to close the segment of the contest in 5.5 seconds and defeat Team Rooks.

The Cavs started the shooting competition off target as Allen, hardly known for his outside touch, made just two shots in 30 seconds. However, Garland brought Cleveland back—and brought their crowd to life—scoring 21 points.

However, the Cavs came out of the relay portion tied with Team Antetokounmpo for second place and needed Garland to win a shoot-off with Thanasis to place Cleveland in the final.

After Cunningham drained his 47-footer in 9.9 seconds, Mobley calmly stepped into his winning shot.

"He's one of a kind," Allen said of his 20-year-old teammate. "Defense, offense and now half court. The whole league knows Evan by now. If they've ever driven to the paint, they definitely know him, so the NBA should know him by now."

Silver sees no easy fix to issues in Simmons-Harden trade

CLEVELAND (AP)—NBA Commissioner Adam Silver didn't like the circumstances that led to the blockbuster Ben Simmons-James Harden trade. He just doesn't see a way to fix them.

Silver noted that players being unhappy with their teams and asking for trades is nothing new. But the commissioner said Saturday that a player taking the stance Simmons did with the Philadelphia 76ers, refusing to play knowing he would be fined, is more complicated.

"I don't have something specific in mind that can prevent a situation like this," Silver said. "But I think we and the players have a collective common interest in ensuring that contracts are honored."

Silver started his annual All-Star news conference with an upbeat tone, saying people around the league were feeling more at ease as the coronavirus pandemic shows signs of easing and restrictions are lifted. He talked of taking the league back on the road again, for games outside the U.S. and more community-based events around the country.

"It's been a difficult time for so many, but I'm frankly thrilled to be back here in person with so many people," Silver said. "I would say it's been a celebratory mood for people in the NBA family."

But he couldn't hide his disappointment about the circumstances surrounding the deal at the trade deadline that ended with Simmons moving from Philadelphia to Brooklyn, just 13 months after the Nets had acquired Harden from Houston.

"Again, it's no secret that I've expressed my unhappiness with public trade demands," Silver said.

"In the case of Ben Simmons, I don't think — I can't think of a change to the system that to the extent you have a player that is willing to sit out and not be paid, which is the scenario we have right now," Silver said. "I don't want to speak for Ben, but that was the posture we saw in that case of a player saying that, 'I'm unhappy in the city, and I'm not going to play.'

"And you had a team saying, 'We're not going to pay you, and there's going to be discipline.' There's a stalemate."

Silver said he was sympathetic to the players' wants, noting the additional stress caused by the pandemic. But he is also concerned for the teams, and the players who are affected when trade rumors leak.

"Of course, as the commissioner of this league, we want our players to be happy. We want them to find themselves in situations where they think they can be most productive," Silver said. "At the same time, we want to run an orderly league, and so like a lot of things in life, we have to find the appropriate balance there."

Simmons cited mental health concerns for his belief he needed to leave Philadelphia, saying last week they began before last season and the 76ers were aware of them. Silver said he didn't know the specifics of Simmons' situation, but that mental health was something teams were spending more time on even before the pandemic.

"I think it's something that we have talked a lot more about in terms of all our community programs, and it's another area where I really don't have any doubt we can do more," he said.

Silver also addressed several other topics:

INTERNATIONAL GAMES

As soon as it's safe, Silver wants the NBA back in overseas markets and has had discussions about doing so as soon as next preseason.

"We're very much a global league, and the opportunity to bring teams to other continents, to other places in the world, is part of how we believe we grow the sport," Silver said. "Because we can have, I think, a dramatically larger impact by showing up in those cities, creating a lot of excitement around those teams."

REPORTERS IN THE LOCKER ROOMS

Reporters covering NBA teams haven't returned to the locker rooms since the pandemic began in March 2020, with interviews being conducted in conference rooms or via Zoom.

Silver downplayed the possibility of a return to the old format, not only for health and safety reasons, but because he believes there could be a better system that would provide more privacy for players.

"I just think this is an opportunity in the pandemic — and there's some real health and safety issues on top of that for all of you and our players as we're still living with this virus that we should include in the mix — but I can't believe we can't find a better way," Silver said. "Maybe it will require some additional appearances, additional media time from our players, but we should take a fresh look at it."

PLAY-IN TOURNAMENT

Silver said the play-in tournament, that has the teams finishing 7-10 in their conferences playing a mini-tournament for the final two playoff spots, has been even more successful than he hoped.

"In many ways, it's been better than we had anticipated," he said. "I don't want to overstate it because I don't have many years to go by, but we're pleased."

Skiing for joy, Gu wins 3rd Olympic medal—a halfpipe gold

ZHANGJIAKOU, China (AP)—Pure joy on the halfpipe looked like this on a sunny, windswept day at the Beijing Olympics:

- It was multinational freeskiing sensation Eileen Gu learning her gold medal was secure, then falling to her knees at the top of that halfpipe, covering her mouth with her mittens and screaming "Oh my God!"
- It was the 18-year-old superstar doing straight airs all the way down the pipe, gleefully punching her fists and poles downward as she vaulted herself above the lip, enjoying every last second of a victory run that meant nothing — and everything.
- It was Gu wearing a furry panda hat as she climbed the podium, smiling wide and belly laughing while accepting her third Bing Dwen Dwen mascot of the Olympics — one for each medal she's won.

"I was very emotional at the top and I chose to do a victory lap," Gu said of her breezy final ride down the pipe Friday. "Because I felt like, for the first time, I really deserved it and I really earned it."

There were smiles mixed with tears as Gu mingled with her competitors, the coaches and the media at the bottom — a huge sense of pride blended with incredible relief. Her two-week odyssey in China included 16 combined runs down halfpipe, slopestyle and big air courses and countless more practice trips down those same icy expanses.

AP

Gold medal winner China's Eileen Gu celebrates during the venue award ceremony for the women's halfpipe finals at the 2022 Winter Olympics, Friday, Feb. 18, 2022, in Zhangjiakou, China.

By winning her gold, in a state-of-the-art contest over defending champion Cassie Sharpe, Gu is the first action-sports athlete to win three medals at the same Olympics. Two were gold and one was silver.

"She has basically set a level that's pretty unattainable for a lot of us," said American freeskier Carly Margulies, who finished 11th.

Gu's trip to China was about more than sports. About 30 months ago, she took a chance and made a statement when she decided to wear the colors of her mother's homeland — China, the host country — instead of those of her native United States.

She received some love and some hate for that move. She explained it time and again: She did it to inspire girls in China. There was little in the way of winter-sports culture here when she was younger. There certainly is more now.

"We're not here to break limits for a country, we're here to break a human limit," Gu said.

Good intentions aside, her trip to the Olympics was ultimately destined to be gauged, at least on the outside, by how she did on the slopes. Yet again, with the pressure on and the world watching, Gu delivered. With her latest win, she stayed undefeated on the halfpipe this season.

"She's a machine," Sharpe said.

With winds gusting left to right on a 3 degree F (minus 16 degree C) day, Gu put this contest to rest on her first run. It included a pair of 900-degree spins in different directions, each frosted with full, second-long reaches downward to grab her skis.

Gu scored a 93.25 for that, then on her second run, she scored two points better.

She increased the difficulty on her final jump, going for back-to-back "alley-oop" flat spins in which she starts her spin twirling up the halfpipe even though she's traveling downhill. She landed both jumps without even a hint of a bobble.

One of her coaches, Misra Tornianen, was even more impressed with the 13 feet, 9 inches Gu flew above the halfpipe on her first hit.

"It's amazing, all she has done without resting, dealing with the pressure and just delivering every day," Tornianen said.

That Gu's win wasn't in much doubt hardly diminished the overall quality of the contest.

A year ago at the Winter X Games, Sharpe fell hard and tore up her left knee. On Friday, for only the second time in her career, she landed two 1080-degree spins in the same run.

Her 2-3 finish, along with teammate Rachael Karker, marked another beautiful day on the halfpipe for Canada. It was that country's best freeskier, the late Sarah Burke, who pushed hard to get women included in halfpipe skiing, and then to bring the sport to the Olympics for the 2014 Sochi Games.

In a twist that feels like something more than just mere happenstance, the sport's original star, Burke, and its newest one, Gu, share the same birthday: Sept. 3.

In an interview last year, Gu spoke about making a wallet out of duct tape for a sixth-grade art project. Across the front, she wrote "Celebrate Sarah," a tribute to the pioneer who had died in a training accident in 2012.

"Even if I'm terrible at art," Gu said that day, "I can still express myself to the best of my ability."

A magazine cover girl who scored 1580 (out of 1600) on the SAT and is Stanford-bound next, Gu saves her finest artwork for the snow. Her latest performance launched her into the debate about best Olympic performances of all time.

More gold for Germany, more Olympic history by Meyers Taylor

BEIJING (AP)—Laura Nolte and Mariama Jamanka added to Germany's record haul of Olympic medals.

Elana Meyers Taylor extended her medal record, too.

The German sliding domination of the Beijing Games continued Saturday, with Nolte driving to gold and Jamanka winning the silver in the women's bobsled competition — and Meyers Taylor, in possibly her last race, grabbed the bronze for the fifth medal of her Olympic career.

That's more than any Black athlete in Winter Olympic history, the most by any women's bobsledder at the Olympics and two more than any other Olympic bobsledder, male or female, has won for the United States.

"That is overwhelming," Meyers Taylor said. "It's so crazy to hear that stat and know that I'm part of a legacy that's bigger than me."

Nolte and Deborah Levi won with ease, finishing four runs in 4 minutes, 3.96 seconds. Jamanka, the 2018 Olympic champion, and Alexandra Burghardt were second in 4:04.73. Meyers Taylor and Olympic rookie Sylvia Hoffman were third in 4:05.48.

"I can't believe it," Nolte said. "It's what we've wanted all along. This was our dream. Winning Olympic gold was our dream."

Gold was Meyers Taylor's dream, too.

But a fifth medal — clearly, she wasn't disappointed whatsoever.

Meyers Taylor smacked the top of her sled in celebration as she crossed the line knowing that the medal was clinched, hopped out and gave Hoffman a hug before throwing her fists into the air.

"I went with the fastest woman out here, because I'm the fastest brakewoman out here," said Hoffman, who wants to start driving.

Germany's Kim Kalicki moved up to fourth in 4:06.28, Canada's Christine de Bruin was fifth in 4:06.37, Switzerland's Melanie Hasler drove to sixth in 4:06.83 and the U.S. team of monobob gold medalist Kaillie Humphries — battling a right leg injury that adversely impacted her start times — and Olympic rookie Kaysha Love fell to seventh in 4:07.04.

"It hurts, I won't lie," Humphries said. "I gave every ounce of everything I had to the last two days and it wasn't there. I'm proud of the work that we put in and what we put into it. It sucks and it's infuriating to know that it wasn't good enough, but at the end of the day, that's racing. We can't be fearful of not being the best. Both Kaysha and I had giant targets on our back coming in and I'm so proud of what we did together."

Humphries plans on missing the next one or two seasons to start a family. She insisted Saturday night that she will race at one final Olympics in 2026.

"At the end of the day, my body just gave up," Humphries said. "My calf did, anyway. And I think my mind, a little bit, too. I just hit a wall and didn't have it."

Said Love, who wants to learn to drive: "I'm so proud of us. The experience that she's given me at my first Olympic Games, it's unmatched."

Germany now has eight golds — in nine events — and 14 medals overall in the three sliding sports at the Beijing Olympics. The Germans will likely add to that on the final day in Beijing, since they have the top two sleds at the midpoint of the four-man competition that will end Sunday. They already have more golds, and more medals, in sliding events than any nation ever has at any Olympics.

What the Germans have done at these Olympics is historic.

And what Meyers Taylor has done at the last four Olympics is also historic.

She's now one of only four bobsledders ever to compete in at least five Olympic races and medal in all of them. She became the fifth American bobsledder to win two medals in a single Olympics — pilot Stan Benham and pusher Pat Martin did it in 1952, pilot Steven Holcomb and pusher Steve Langton did it in 2014. And, thanks to women having two events at the Olympics for the first time this year, she's going to forever be the first female bobsledder to win two medals at the same Games.

"It meant a lot to me to have her support my career goals," Hoffman said.

Meyers Taylor's totals, including her Olympic debut as a push athlete: three silvers, two bronzes. The Beijing medals were a silver behind Humphries in monobob, and now this bronze.

"She's already a legend in the sport," U.S. men's push athlete Carlo Valdes said. "Another medal just adds to all the accolades, really. ... She's in a league of her own and it's cool to watch."

Barring some massive comeback by Hunter Church or Frank DelDuca in the four-man race that ends Sunday, USA Bobsled will end the Beijing Games with three medals. The Americans won four in bobsled at the 1932 and 2014 Games; they also won three in 1948 and 2002.

"For us to have three medals in this Olympics, that's a grand slam considering where we're coming from with Kaillie's citizenship and Elana having COVID two weeks ago," U.S. bobsled coach Mike Kohn said.

Indeed, this road was far from an easy one for the Americans.

Humphries didn't even know until December, when she obtained citizenship, that she would be able to compete in Beijing. And Meyers Taylor was in isolation when the Olympics started after testing positive for the coronavirus, meaning she had to give up her role as one of the two U.S. flagbearers at the opening ceremony.

Thousands of dollars' worth of prizes up for grabs at NMC Golf Open

Thousands of dollars' worth of prizes will be up for grabs at the 17th Annual Northern Marianas College Golf Open set for Saturday, March 19, 2022 at the east course of the Laolao Bay Golf and Resort.

First place winners in the men's Championship, A, B, C, Senior, and Ladies Flights (low gross and low net) will each receive $500, while $300 and $200 will go to the second and third place finishers, respectively.

In addition to the flight prizes, there will be hole-in-one prizes such as a brand new 2022 Civic Sport Hatchback from Joeten Motors, a brand new 2022 Hyundai Kona N-Line from Triple J Motors, and $5,000 from McDonald's.

The 2022 NMC Golf Open is the first major golf tournament of the year and will be held on the east course of the Saipan LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort. Showtime is at 6am, and the shotgun start will be at 7am. The tournament will follow a medal play format.

Interested players can still register for the tournament by visiting www.marianas.edu/golf2022 or by emailing NMC Foundation coordinator Carla Sablan at carla.sablan@marianas.edu. This year's tournament fee is $120.

The college is asking companies, organizations, or individuals who are interested in sponsoring holes and/or for any in-kind or cash donation to help support the CNMI's post-secondary institution. For more information on how to become a sponsor, please call 237-6780. ***(PR)***

NMC

Thousands of dollars' worth of prizes will be up for grabs at NMC's upcoming Golf Open on Saturday, March 19, 2022 at the Laolao Bay Golf and Resort. For more information, visit NMC.

NMI

From Page 20

Chavez's assist to a sprinting Casarino, who noticed only one defender chasing her and quickly capitalized to add to their lead.

"I knew I could outsprint my defender so I kept running. I also saw one of my teammates catching up so when I stopped in front of the goal and the Guam goalie, I immediately took the shot, knowing that If I miss, my teammate has my back," Casarino said.

After falling behind at 0-2 at the break, Guam was pretty determined to bounce back as this time they made repeated attempts to score, but just couldn't complete the play. No thanks to the NMI's steady defense, especially from goalie Dehesa Mendiola, who made a lot of saves.

"It was a busy night, as I really had to stop those many shots from Guam in the second half. At first, I am quite nervous, but then when I started getting those balls, I felt confident and just told myself, 'don't allow them to score,'" said Mendiola, who is attending her first training camp.

The friendlies are part of the team's six-game training camp at the GFA facility. The NMI U18 will meet Guam U18 anew on Wednesday and coach Irish Pagarao was pleased with how the young players performed in the first match and their work at the training camp.

"The first win is important to boost the players' confidence," said Pagarao. I like how they passed the ball, connected the passes, and gave them to the space. We told them to keep football simple and take more risks in scoring."

Pagarao utilized all the U18 players in their first game, giving Rizza Relucio, Tyan Hix, Audrey Castro, Sophia Quintos, Cassie and Fiona Regan, Joselynn Atalig, and Kaye Anne Costales time at the pitch.

"We made sure everyone played because we wanted them to experience how it's like competing off-island because they are the future of the NMI women's football. We have more work ahead of us, so we want the girls to stay focused and determined."

Matao wins men's game; Ayuyus moving forward

Meanwhile, Guam blanked the NMI, 2-0, in the men's match.

Ryan Quitugua scored the first goal for the Matao, while Devin Mendiola logged the other goal for the host.

The NMI and Guam engaged in a very physical game and the latter came out victorious as it dominated possessions and took more shots.

Despite the loss, NMI head coach Michiteru Mita told his players to keep their heads up and take the defeat as a challenge to get better the next game.

"Think of what's next after this match. Think of what we can do better when we play them again. Losing is part of our learning process. We came here to train and gain experience, so just stay committed to the team and try your best to improve, that's our mind set as we move forward after this game," said Mita.

The NMI coach also encouraged his players to take more chances at shooting.

"You did good tonight, but you have to take more risks on offense next time. Take that shot," Mita said.

Meanwhile, the NMI Men's U20 players were scheduled to play Guam yesterday afternoon, while the NMI Women's National Team were slated to duel the hosts in the nightcap.

Today, the NMI delegation will take a breather before returning to the GFA facility for the remaining two-day training sessions and the last four friendly games.

JIMIN

From Page 20

In the women's singles, top seed Hyejin Elliot has so far won two of her matches and will play second seed and good friend Serin Chung this morning. Elliot has beaten Gillian Lucero, 6-3, 6-0, and Jeanne Bracken, 6-0, 6-0. Chung has so far dispatched Bracken, 6-0, 6-0.

In the boys singles 16, unseeded Simon Tang currently is at 2-0 with wins over No. 2 seed Wataru Kadokura (3-6, 6-4, 10-7) and Jack Linden (6-0, 6-1). No. 1 June Yu is at 1-0 after beating DK Kang (4-0, retired). Kadokura earlier beat Kang (6-3, 7-6 (9)) and Kang won over Linden (6-1, 6-1).

Top seed Irin Chung and second see Hoo Wang will duke it out in the finals of the girls singles 14. Chung advanced with a 6-0, 6-0 sweep of Hannah Chae, while Wang had a walkover win over Anna Kwon.

In the boys singles 14, Henry Choi and Nason Wessel and Yutaka Kadokura and Siwoo Lee were supposed to play each other in the semifinals yesterday, but scores are still pending.

Ditto for the semis pairings of Ryan Choi and Ian Chae and Jihun Park and Matthew Hwang in the boys singles 12.

In the boys singles 10, Michael Jeon will play Cody Park in the finals after the former won via walkover against Daniel Kang and the former beat Antonio Heras, 6-1.

Stella Choi is so far undefeated in the girls singles 10 following 6-0 wins over Vivian Chung and Jenna Pascual. Emma Lang is also perfect with wins over Chung (6-1) and Pascual (6-0).

In the women's singles 40, Marivic Dunlop has defeated Elizabeth Culp, 4-6, 6-3, 10-4, and Sarka Glajchova, 6-1, 6-0. Yuko Kumada is at 1-1 with a walkover win over Glajchova and a 2-6, 3-6 loss to Culp. Culp is at 2-1 with wins over Glajchova (walkover) and the aforementioned victory over Kumada.

The 35-team mixed doubles field had its semifinals yesterday, but results are still pending as of press time.

The 2021 White Coconut Tennis Classic is organized by the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association.

TEAM

From Page 20

Market where he had to zigzag, everything was OK.

Saipan International School '22 was the only other team entered in the competitive division with skipper Rex Pixley, Tiana Cabrera, Jesse Sablan, and Serin Chung crossing the finish line in 1:46:45.

Team KNAS4 actually had the fastest time and topped the non-competitive division with a time of 1:29.11.

Captain Kasuke Sato said his team was supposed to enter the competitive division, but their other female runner, Akiko Miller, was indisposed. Miller was replaced by Taro Goto and the rest of the team was made up of Shuji Kuroda and Noriko Jim.

Coming in second in the non-competitive division was Running Bikers of captain Floro Derexes, Edgar Abalos, Ronald Villafria, and Arvin Velasco after the quartet reached the road in front of the Club Elan parking lot in 1:47:38.

Rounding out third in the non-competitive division was the all-women's team of Run Saipan Pacemakers led by skipper Rosemarie Chisato with members Evelyn Pangelinan, Jessica Ortizo, and Ann Bang. They finished the race in 1:51:49.

A total of 12 teams took part in the face-to-face version of the Inaugural Marianas Ekiden with other teams opting for the virtual option.

The rest of the teams that joined the non-competitive division are Marianas Ekiden 2 in 1:57:02 (Robyn Spaeth, Kathy Ruszala, Michael Mancao, and Simon Necesito), Arguably Descent in 1:58:11 (Brad Ruszala, Trey Dunn, Travis Spaeth, and Robby Glass), Marianas Ekiden 1 in 2:02:02 (Denise Myers, Sildrey Veloria, Moji De Luna, and Kurt Songsong), Go Extra Mile in 2:26:50 (Eric Abragan, Sharon Abragan, Christian Joseph Yap, and Laarni Zapanta), GXM ENC in 2:28:58 (Daryll De Luna, Jedidiah Peteru, Dylon Deleon Guerrero, and Duncan Laxa), Scrambled Legs in 2:29:47 (Margie Camu, Nicole Delon Guerrero, Limuel Bernal, and Aaron Pamintuan), and GXM Jr. in 3:07:57 (Barbara Peteru, Heart Mariell De Luna, Alyssa Omampo, and Alan Peteru).

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Towns wins 3-point contest; Toppin tops slam dunk

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Thousands of dollars' worth of prizes up for grabs at NMC Golf Open

PAGE 19

MARK RABAGO

Team Run Saipan of, from left, captain Chong Nam Lee, Michael Denevan, Ayano Braxton, and Lily Muldoon topped the competitive division of the Inaugural Marianas Ekiden last Saturday from Micro Beach in Garapan to just before Pacific Islands Club Saipan in San Antonio and back.

Team Run Saipan tops Inaugural Marianas Ekiden

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Fittingly a team named Run Saipan won the non-profit club's Inaugural Marianas Ekiden held last Saturday from Micro Beach in Garapan to just before Pacific Islands Club Saipan in San Antonio and back.

Led by team captain and barefoot runner Chong Nam Lee and with speedsters Lily Muldoon, Michael Denevan, and Ayano Braxton in the lineup, Run Saipan finished the 21-kilometer run in 1:32:38 to win the competitive division.

Braxton, Muldoon, and Denevan each tackled the first 5K increments of the race before Lee anchored the team by finishing the 6K part.

"There's no secret or anything. Luckily we had good members for this event. We just met here and we just chatted [on social media]," said Lee, who personally picked his three members with help from Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr.

Muldoon said the Run Saipan team evolved a lot in the past two weeks.

"We had some people pull out and in isolation due to COVID and it's been a very hodgepodge team. It wasn't until this morning that we realized we will be running together. Our secret is we're just recognizing that this is an international team. We have representation from Korea, Japan, and America," she said.

Braxton was surprised she got picked on the winning team.

"I just got a message two days ago and was told my teammates were Mr. Lee, Lily, and Michael and I said 'what? I'm not ready!'"

Overall, Muldoon said it was nice to start the half marathon relay bright and early at 5:30am for a change. Lee said Saturday morning was near perfect conditions for a long run because, save for some rain near PIC and some cars blocking their running course at Sabalu

See TEAM on Page 19

NMI draws 1st blood vs Guam

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The NMI Women's U18 National Team's Jannah Casarino, left, tries to maneuver his way out of the Guam defender during their friendly game last Saturday at the Guam Football Association National Training Center.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

NMI Women's U18 National Team players and officials pose for a photo after beating Guam, 4-0.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

GUAM—The NMI made it to the win column first in its series of friendly matches against Guam as the NMI Women's U18 National Team shut down its counterparts, 4-0, last Saturday night at the Guam Football Association National Training Center.

Allyssya Angeles, Jannah Casarino, Kaithlynn Chavez, and Tamia Hix delivered the goals for the visiting squad and they were also part of the starting 11 along with team captain Julienne Hall, Summer Manahane, Mia Abuan, Julie Ann Chavez, Christina Atalig, Pia Ngewakl, and Aubrey Castro.

Angeles hit the board first, while Casarino gave the NMI a 2-0 halftime lead. In the second half, Kaithlyn Chavez made it a 3-0 advantage and then was credited for an assist to Hix for the fourth and last goal in the match.

The NMI U18 made a couple of attempts early on and missed, but kept trying and remained aggressive. The team's persistence finally paid off when Angeles was on the defense line, trying to create space between her and Casarino, and moved away from Guam defenders. Angeles succeeded and Kaithlynn Chavez fed her the ball for the shot.

The NMI's second goal was also courtesy of Kaithlynn

See NMI on Page 19

Jimin win away from taking men's singles title

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Top seed Jimin Woo advanced to the men's singles finals of the 2021 White Coconut Tennis Classic set at the American Memorial Park today.

This, after the 17-year-old senior at Saipan International School vanquished Andy Kim in straight sets, 6-0, 6-0 yesterday at the same tennis venue.

Woo's opponent in the championship will be No. 2 seed Colin Ramsey after he got the better of fourth seed Sam Ryu, 7-6, 6-2, also yesterday.

Asked what he think his chances against Ramsey is in the finals, a confident Woo said nothing less than a championship will be an acceptable result for his.

"Because I have never lost to him," he said.

See JIMIN on Page 19

Woo